BLACK PRIDE RESOURCE GUIDE 2006

the ultimate guide to black lgbt events

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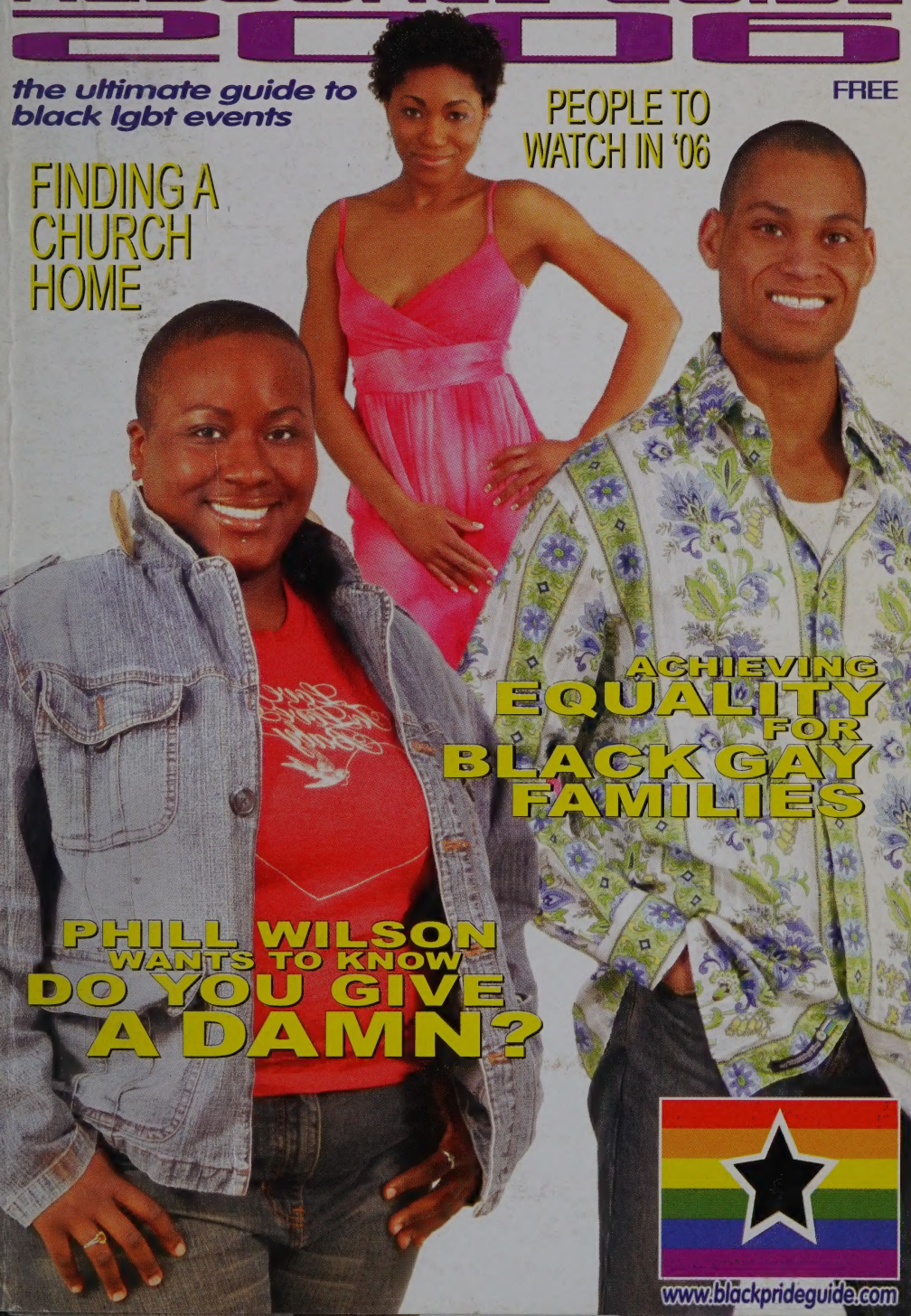

ACHIEVING EQUALITY FOR BLACK GAY FAMILIES

PHILL WILSON WANTS TO KNOW DO YOU GIVE A DAMN?

www.blackprideguide.com

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October 12 – 16, 2006

CRUISE PACKAGE

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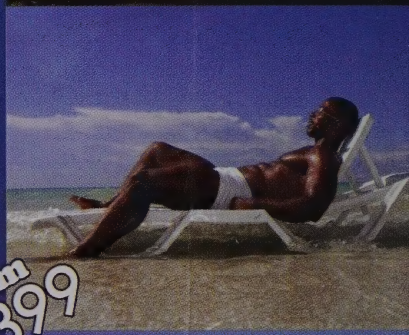
Bahamas Nightclub/Party



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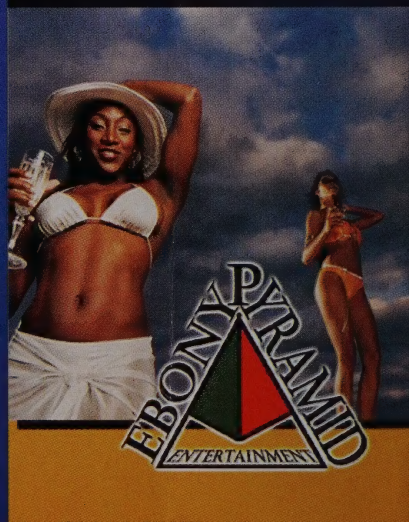

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BLACK PRIDE RESOURCE GUIDE 2006

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www.blackprideguide.com

Are you ready? Well, get ready, folks! It's that time of year again. Time to celebrate being Black and same-gender loving.

We all know the historic legacy of our heritage as African Americans, but what about our legacy as same-gender loving people? What is our legacy?

Over the last few years, many institutions within the Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) community have struggled to remain strong. Some, like the Pride organizations themselves, relied heavily upon HIV/AIDS prevention funding, which has dwindled under the current political administration.

Being Black and same-gender loving poses a unique set of issues that are best addressed by those who live in those shoes. Show your pride this summer by supporting the many organizations listed in the *BLACK PRIDE RESOURCE GUIDE* and institutions that work on behalf of our people. Remember, there is strength in our unity.

cover photography: Amery Moultry

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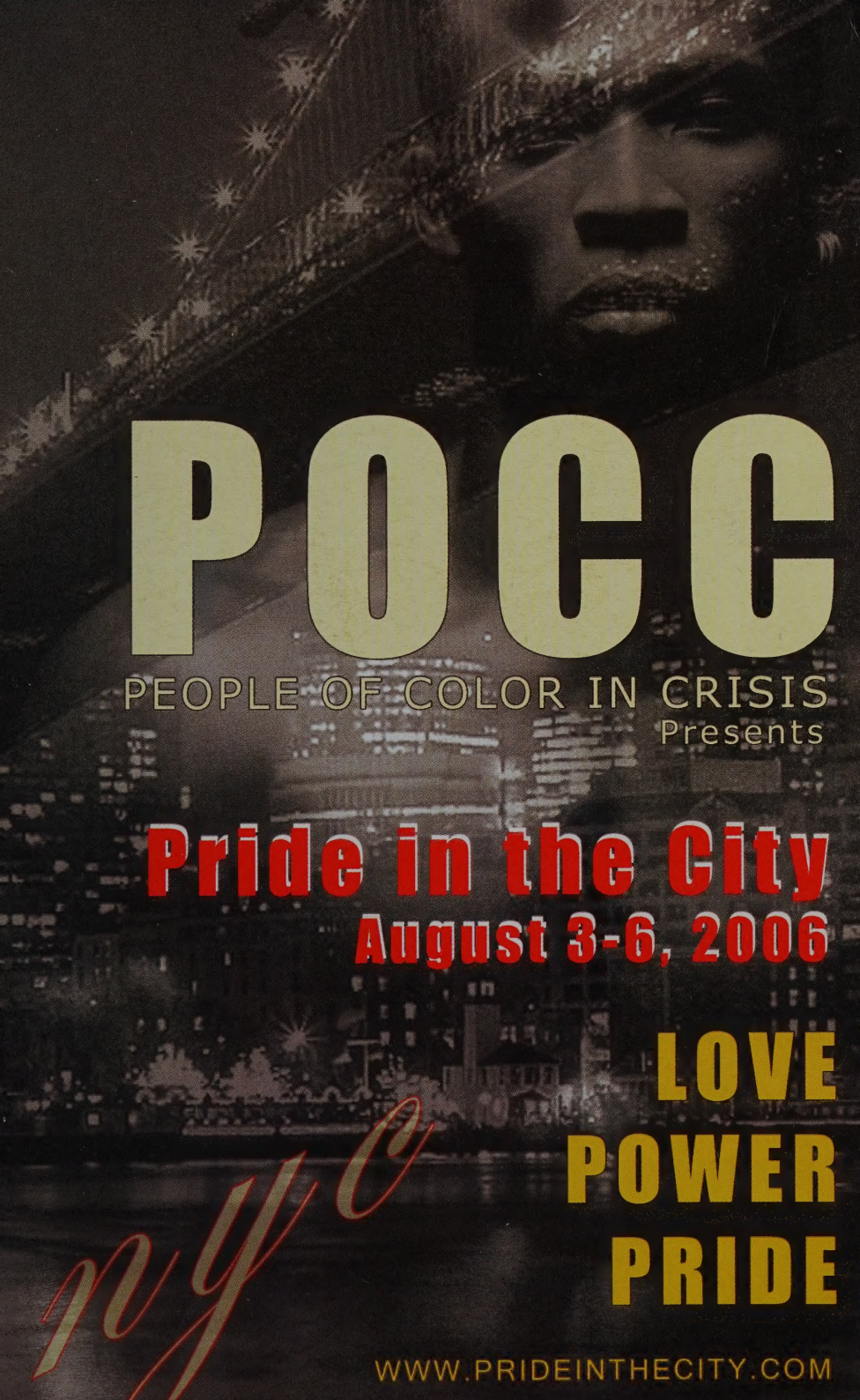
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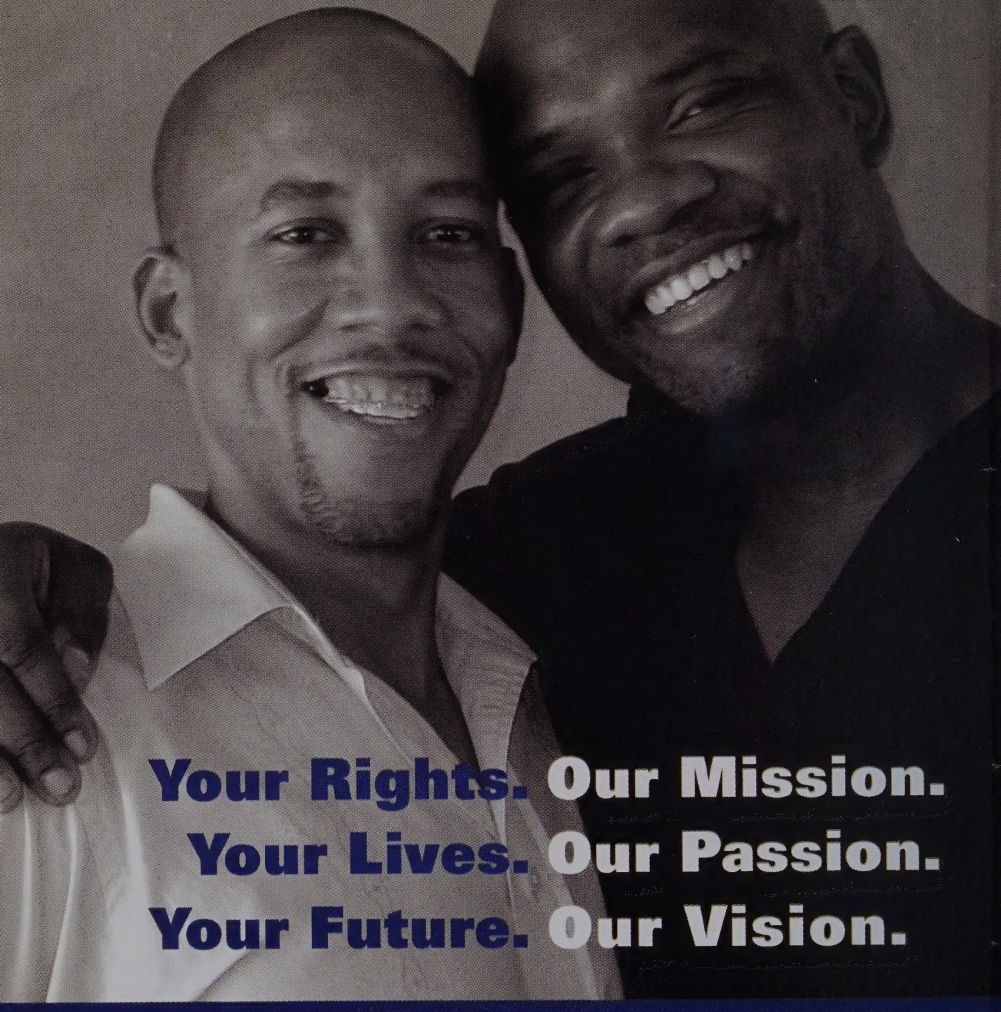
Andre Lejeune and his partner Corey Davis joined 11 other same-sex couples to boldly challenge the State of California for the right to marry. NCLR is representing these couples in *Woo v. Lockyer*, a landmark lawsuit seeking to overturn California's discriminatory marriage laws.



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www.nclrights.org

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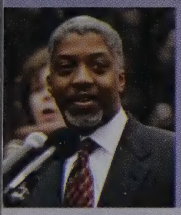
Contact us for free legal information. Hablamos español.

NCLR: 870 Market St, Suite 370, San Francisco, CA 94102 | 415-392-6257 | info@nclrights.org



Jamal Has Two Mommies:
Achieving Equality for Black Gay Families

by H. Alexander Robinson

Pride season is upon us, and lesbians and gay men across the nation are focusing on the achievements of the gay civil rights movement. Black same gender loving people are coming together in cities from Washington, DC, to Los Angeles to raise funds to support our communities' needs, celebrate our culture, and raise the consciousness of our communities about the challenges we face.

Few topics will be more hotly debated and potentially politically and socially divisive than the call by progressive Americans to end the discrimination against gay families in marriage.

Equality and freedom from discrimination are core American values and of utmost political consequence for all minorities, but especially African Americans. So it should concern us all that some opponents of gay equality insist that by claiming the legacy of our nation's civil rights struggle, gay civil rights advocates are misappropriating African-Americans' fight for justice. However, the right not to be discriminated against is an American birthright that we all expect to enjoy under our laws and our Constitution. If America is to be a truly fair and open country, then the quest for civil rights must be universally American.

Black families have more to gain, on average, from the legal protections of marriage. A study of the 2000 Census data released last year by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) shows that Black lesbian couples are parenting at almost the same rate as Black married couples, and that Black same-sex couples parent at twice the rate of White gay couples. They also earn less, are less likely to own a home, and are more likely to hold public sector jobs.

- Three in five Black lesbian households (61%) include at least one child of one or both of the same-sex partners. Black lesbian couple households are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couple households (69%) to include a child of one or both of the adults. Nearly half of Black male same-sex couple households (46%) include a child of one or both of the partners.

- Black same-sex couples earn $20,000 less per year than White same-sex couples and are less likely to own the home they live in. They also earn less than Black married opposite-sex couples.

- Black gay partners are more likely than White gay partners to hold public sector jobs, which may provide domestic partner health insurance. Nine of the 13 state anti-gay marriage amendments approved last year threaten domestic partner benefits provided through state and local governmental entities, such as Dekalb County, Georgia or Ohio State University.

continued on page 28 >

fighting mad
Phill Wilson is trying to understand why the black gay community is not outraged by the latetest HIV statistics

photo: Duane Cramer

Nearly 50% of Black Gay men in America may already be infected with HIV!

Does anyone give a damn?

by Phill Wilson

Men who have sex with men (MSM) bear a greater burden of HIV than any other group in the U.S. We account for an estimated 45 percent of people living with HIV, compared to 27 percent infected through heterosexual contact, and 22 percent infected through injection drug use.

In June 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a study showing a stunning 46%—nearly half—of the Black homosexual and bisexual men surveyed in five major cities were already HIV-positive (more than twice the infection rate among men of other races).

To make matters worse, more than two-thirds of the HIV-infected Black men in the study were unaware of their infection. That's right. Half of us may be infected and, of that half, two-thirds don't know it and so almost certainly aren't doing anything about it.

The factors contributing to the spread of HIV among Black gay and bisexual men are complex and vary from person to person. While some men do not yet recognize the level of risk they face, others are making complex decisions about sex and relationships based on perceptions about their partners' serostatus, old myths, and plain misinformation rather than real knowledge and open communication. There is a perception that AIDS is not as bad as it was, and of course there is an understandable desire among many of us to just enjoy relationships and have plain fun. Many of us are just tired of talking about how we are all going to die. But that fatigue will kill us. Disease does not have to overshadow our lives, but we must remain aware enough of it to protect ourselves.

Forty-six percent isn't a catastrophe. It's genocide!

But where is the outrage? As far as we can tell, following the CDC's announcement no Black or gay media organizations ran front-page stories. No civil rights organization marched in the streets or called on policymakers to take action. No Black celebrities sponsored relief concerts. There wasn't even a call to action issued by a Black gay and lesbian organization!

Now we could make charges of racism and homophobia (and some of us have). And we might be right. But those charges would not be helpful

and may be beside the point. A Black LGBT group founded to advocate for civil marriage rights sponsored a town hall meeting on "The State of Black LGBT America" during the annual Black gay pride event in Los Angeles in July 2005. AIDS was not even on the agenda. Nearly 50% of Black gay men in America may already be infected with HIV, and AIDS is not on our agenda? How can that be? While equal rights, including the right to marry, are certainly worthwhile goals, they are not very useful to us if we are dead. Keeping us alive long enough to enjoy the rights we deserve should at least be on the list.

This is not the first time the alarm has been sounded. An eye-opening 1994 study put HIV prevalence among Black homosexual and bisexual men at 21%. We did virtually nothing in response. That study was followed by a CDC study in 2000 in which—surprise, surprise—the prevalence rate among Black MSM had increased to over 30%. And again, after calling on the CDC to do more, we did virtually nothing. Now we're looking at 50%.

What will it take? How many Black gay men have to get infected, get sick and die before we—not CDC, not the Congressional Black Caucus, not the large AIDS organizations, but Black gay/bisexual/same gender loving/etc.—mobilize and take action?

Following CDC's prevention conference in June 2005 some Black gay and AIDS activists grumbled about the amount of attention crystal meth is getting. Please. White gay men are doing exactly what they should be doing. They are forcing each other to take responsibility, be accountable and attack a threat that is attacking them. Meanwhile, we're dancing from pride event to pride event while this threat is barreling down on us.

We have to start a national public discourse among ourselves about this new AIDS reality. We must create a cultural shift to where knowing your HIV status is the norm, where those of us who are negative are committed to stay that way and where those of us who are positive refuse to engage in behavior that might expose our brothers to the virus. We must all support each other in our collective and individual campaigns to end the epidemic. Nothing short of an all-out mobilization is acceptable. We must not allow any of the institutions or businesses that we support to fail to do their part in ending this epidemic. Most importantly, we must increase our visibility and demand our rightful places in our communities.

There is a role for all parties to play—government, the larger Black community, the white LGBT community, our society as a whole—but we must be willing to hold ourselves accountable and responsible for our own survival. How can Black gay and bisexual or same gender loving men ask others to respond if we continue to be so complacent in the face of our own genocide?

Phill Wilson is the Executive Director of the Black AIDS Institute. www.blackaids.org.

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National Gay and Lesbian

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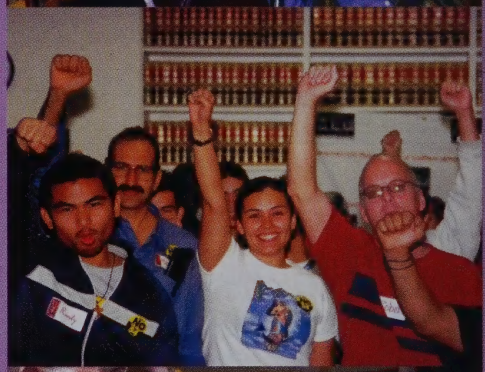


Building the political power of our community from the ground up. We Create Change.

www.theTaskForce.org

AUSTIN, TX

Austin Relay 4 Life Pride Celebration

April 7 - 9, 2006

Contact:
Email: Info@austinrelay4life.com;
www.austinrelay4life.com

PHILADELPHIA, PA •

Philadelphia Black Pride

April 27 - 30, 2006

Contact:
Philadelphia Black Gay Pride, Inc.
c/o COLOURS, Inc.,1201 Chestnut St., 15th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19101; 215.496.0330; pride@coloursinc.org; www.phillyblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
The Crowne Plaza, 1800 Market St., Philadelphia, PA; 215.561.7500. Room Rate: $135

Friday, April 28
Opening Reception 6pm - 8pm; Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1800 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19103

Sunday, April 30
Interfaith Brunch, 9:30am - 12pm; Crowne Plaza Liberty A - 2nd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Closing Expo, 12pm - 6pm; 1st Troop Phila. Nat'l Armory, 23rd Street (Between Market & Chestnut streets) Philadelphia, PA 19103

HOUSTON, TX

Houston Splash

May 2 - 8, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 667248, Houston, TX 77266-7248; 832.443.1016; www.houstonsplash.com

Host Hotel:
Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 2828 Southwest Frwy Houston, TX 77098-4502; 713.942.2111

Thursday, May 4
Strip Down -N- H-Town, 11:30pm; Venue: TBA

Friday, May 5
Sapience Magazine Welcome Reception, 6 - 9pm; Host Hotel

11th Annual Him.4.Him Kick.Off Party, 10pm - 4am; The Meridian, 1503 Chartres St., Houston, TX 77003

11th Annual Her.4.Her Kick.Off Party, 10pm - 3:30am; Club TOYZ, 5322 Glenmont Dr., Houston, TX 77081

Late Night Strip Lounge All Black Affair, 10pm - 2am; Club Bartini, 1318 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77081

Saturday, May 6
Urban Lounge Vol.3; Venue: TBA

Flavalife Him.4.Him Party, 10pm - 4am; The Meridian

Voodoo Ball Vol. 3 "Ball or Fall," 2am - 4am; The Meridian

She-Doo Voodoo Her.4.Her Striptease; Venue: TBA

Sunday, May 7
Revolution Worship Celebration, 11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Voodoo East Beach Party, 12pm - 6pm; East Beach, 1923 Boddeker Drive, Galveston, TX 77550

Sunday Soiree Happy Hour, 7pm - 12am; Club Bartini, 1318 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77081

Southern Beach After-Party Show, 10pm - 3:30am; Club Richs, 2401 San Jacinto, Houston, TX 77056

Monday, May 8
Private Dancer Strip Show, 10pm - 3am; Club Bartini

All itineraries are tentative and subject to change. For full descriptions of events, updates and changes, please visit each web site periodically.

Listings were compiled from individual pride web sites and www.ifbprides.org. • Denotes International Federation of Black Pride member.

MIAMI, FL

Miami Sizzle

May 24 - 29, 2006

Contact:
1001 North Federal Hwy, Suite 305, Hallandale Beach, FL 33009; 305.528.7495; mail@sizzlemiami.com; www.sizzlemiami.com; www.sizzleher.com

Host Hotel:
Hyatt Regency, 400 South East Second Ave., Miami, FL 33131

Wednesday, May 24
VIP Cocktail Reception, 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Thursday, May 25
Sizzle Hospitality Lounge, Headquarters & Cyber Lounge Opens, 2:30pm - 10:30pm, Thurs. - Mon.; Host Hotel

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 5am

Friday, May 26
Sizzle 2006 Welcome Reception

Nightclub Party,10pm - 6am

Saturday, May 27
Sizzle Luau/Hawaiian Delights (Theme Event), 3pm - 7pm

Industry/Networking Cocktail Party (Invitation Only), 10pm - 11pm

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

Sunday, May 28
Sizzle Chapel, 11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Sunday Brunch,11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Haulover Take-Over, 2pm - 5pm, Beach Event; shuttle buses provided

Dinner and Jazz at Sea - Elegant Upscale Event, 7:30pm - 11pm. All-White Attire (Advance purchase only)

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

Infinity Ball (Theme Event), 11pm - 4am

Monday, May 29
Haulover Take-Over II, 2pm - 5pm, Beach Event; shuttle buses provided

Sizzling Party Boat - Booze N' Cruise, 2:30pm - 5:30pm. Advance purchase only

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

WASHINGTON, DC

DC Black Pride

May 26 - 29, 2006

Contact:
DC Black Pride, P. O. Box 77071, Washington, DC 20013; 202.737.5767; 1.866.94.BLGPD contactus@dcblackpride.org; www.dcblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
M Street Hotel, 1143 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202.775.0800

Friday, May 26
DC Black Pride Hospitality Suite, 11am - 8 pm, Fri - Sat.; Host Hotel

Welcome to the Red Room Opening Reception, 8pm - 11pm. Speed Dating, Message Center and The Ice Breaker; Host Hotel

Saturday, May 27
Wellness Festival and Workshops, 10am - 12pm; Host Hotel

DC Black Pride presents a Town Hall Meeting 1pm - 2:30pm; Host Hotel

Free Travel Trade Show sponsored by the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, 2pm - 5pm; Mayflower Hotel - 1127 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036

Film Festival, 3pm - 7pm; Host Hotel

Soul on Fire! DC Black Pride Spoken Word Slam, 7pm - 9pm; Host Hotel

Sunday, May 28
Interfaith Service, 9am - 11am; Host Hotel

DC Black Pride Festival 2006, 12pm - 7pm; Location: TBA. Vendors, Entertainment and more

DC Is Burning Ball, time/location TBA

Monday, May 29
DC Black Pride Festival in the park, 12pm - 7pm
Location: TBA

BOSTON, MA / NEW ENGLAND

Black Gay Pride New England
June 6 - 11, 2006

Contact:
617.238.2404; ljames@mac-boston.org; www.mac-boston.org

PORTLAND, OR

Portland Black Pride
June 11 - 18, 2006

Contact:
Brother to Brother Portland, P.O. Box 3182, Portland, OR 97208; 503.417.7991; www.brotobropdx.org; info@brotobropdx.org

MEMPHIS, TN

Memphis Black Pride
June 16 - 18, 2006

Contact:
901.331.3579 or 901.331.3438; hardawayarg@yahoo.com or terryltbuck61@aol.com; www.memphisblackpride.com

COLUMBIA, SC

Black & Latino Gay Pride Celebration
June 19-25, 2006

Contact:
Carolinas Black Pride Movement, 805 Cates St. Suite - I, Charlotte, NC 28202; 704.713.6948 or 704.968.3916; info@carolinasblackpridemovement.com; www.carolinasblackpridemovement.com

Host Hotel:
1200 Hampton St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.771.7000

Monday, June 19
Volunteer Training & Social, 6pm; Location: TBA

Tuesday, June 20
March to End AIDS; S.C. State House

Wednesday, June 21
Pride Kick-Off Party; Club Fusion, 920 Lady St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.765.1574

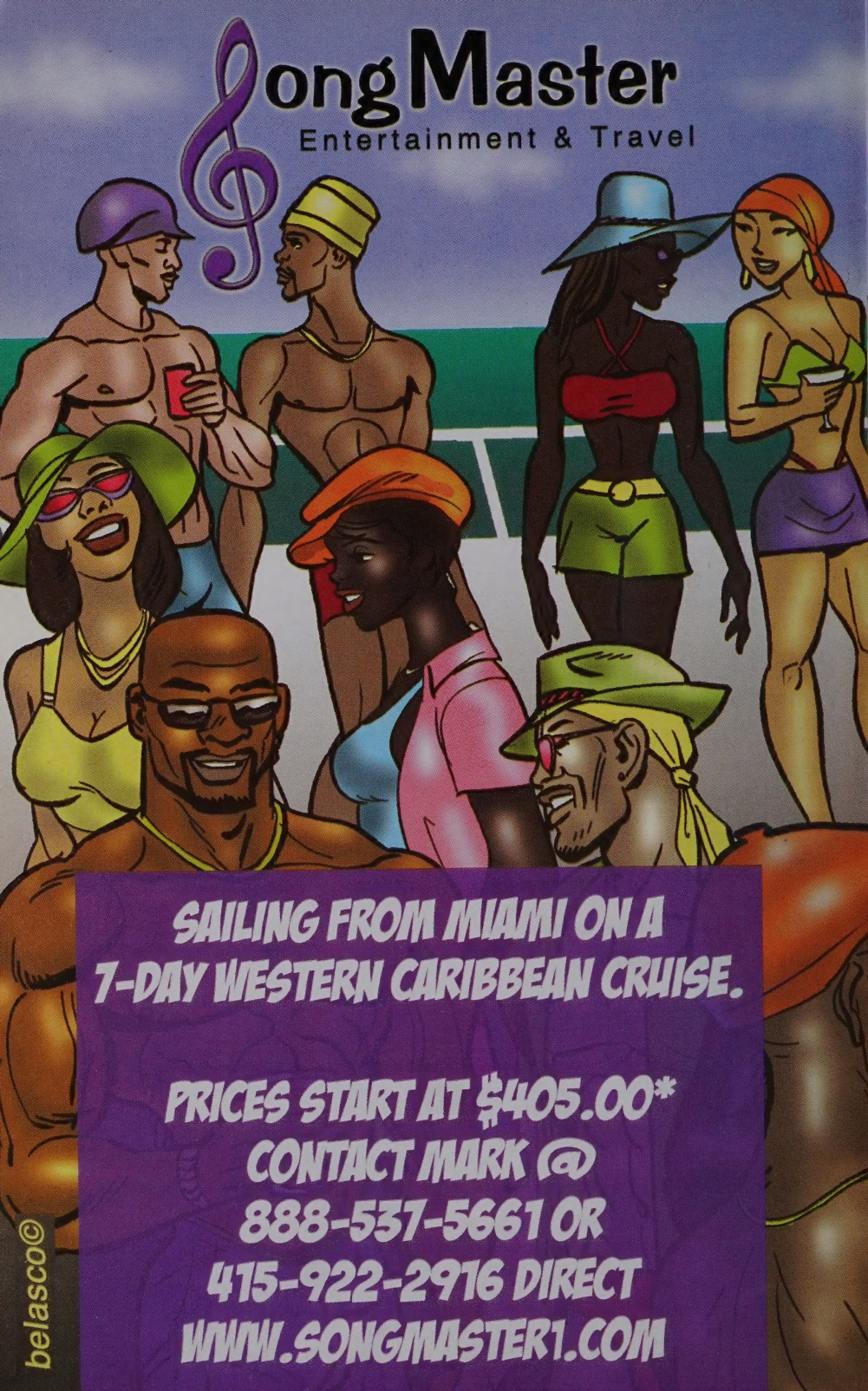
Thursday, June 22
"State of Emergency," Town Hall Meeting, 7pm; University of South Carolina's Law School Auditorium. Topics: Marriage Equality, HIV/AIDS Complimentary dinner served

Columbia Black & Latino Gay Pride Pageant, 9pm; PT's Cabaret, 1101 Harden St., Columbia, SC; 803.758.6090.

Friday, June 23
Black & Latino Gay Film Showcase, 5pm - 9pm; Featuring *Black Aura on the Angel, Just Between Us, Keith & Greg, DL Chronicles, Walk in the Light, Brooklyn's Bridge* and *Strange Fruit.* Nicklelodeon Theatre, 937 Main St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.254.8234 office (hours are 10-6 Monday-Friday); www.nickelodeon.org

Saturday, June 24
Black & Latino Gay Pride Expo, 10am - 6pm; Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Featuring Billy Porter, Frenchie Davis, Mekole Wells. Vendors, local & national entertainment, Kidz Corner, Pride Souvenirs, Author's Square, Wellness Fair, free samples and promotional giveaways

Sunday, June 25
Pride Worship Service & Picnic, 1pm; Garden of Grace United Methodist Church (picnic following service)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LOS ANGELES, CA

At The Beach
June 28 - July 3, 2006

Contact:
At The Beach, Shorey Inc., DBA Los Angeles Black Pride, 4745 West Slauson Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90056; 323.293.4282; atbla@aol.com; www.atbla.com

CHICAGO, IL

Windy City Black Pride
June 30 - July 3, 2006

Contact:
773.473.4100; cnelson@windycityblackpride.org; www.windycityblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601-3764; 312.565.1234

TAMPA, FL

Central Florida Black Pride
July 20 - 23, 2006

Contact:
813.391.6776; floridablkpride@aol.com; www.floridablackpride.net

CHARLOTTE, NC

Charlotte NC Black Gay Pride
July 20 - 23, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 242596, Charlotte, NC 28224; 704.822.1356; pride@charlottencblackgaypride.org; www.charlottencblackgaypride.org

Host Hotel:
Best Western Charlotte Uptown, 201 S. McDowell St., Charlotte, NC 28204-2218; 704.372.7550

SEATTLE, WA

Seattle Black Pride
July 21 - 23, 2006

Contact:
1122 E. Pike St., #722, Seattle, WA 98122; 206.321.9794; info@seattleblackpride.org; www.seattleblackpride.org

DETROIT, MI

Detroit's Hotter Than July
July 26 - 30, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 3025, Detroit, MI 48231; 313.289.8669; info@hotterthanjuly.com; www.hotterthanjuly.com

PITTSBURGH, PA

Pittsburgh Black Pride
July 27 - 30, 2006

Contact:
412-537-7472; pghblackpride@hotmail.com

BROOKLYN, NY

Pride In The City
August 3 - 6, 2006

Contact:
People of Color in Crisis, 468 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11217; 718.230.0770 ext. 234; www.prideinthecity.com

JACKSONVILLE, FL

Jacksonville Florida Black Pride
August 4 - 6, 2006

Contact:
Jacksonville Florida Black Pride, Inc., P.O. Box 18841, Jacksonville, FL 32229; 904.858.3757; jaxbp@aol.com; www.jaxxblackpride.com

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Toronto Black Pride
August 4 - 12, 2006

Contact:
34 Davis Road, Aurora, Ontario, Canada C4G 2B6; 905.726.1615; info@torontoblackpride.com
www.torontoblackpride.com

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Indiana Black Gay Pride
August 11 - 13, 2006

Contact:
317.592.9529; indianablackgaypride@yahoo.com; www.indianablackpride.com

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Minnesota GLBT Soul Essence
August 11 - 13, 2006

Contact:
5820 10th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55417; 612.414.2102;
www.soulessenceminnesota.org

ST. LOUIS, MO

St. Louis Black Pride
August 18 - 20, 2006

Contact:
St. Louis Black Pride Committee, Inc., P.O. Box 4854; St. Louis, MO 63108; 314.776.4966; president@stlouisblackpride.org;
www.stlouisblackpride.org

OAKLAND, CA

Bay Area Black In The Life Celebration
August 16 - 20, 2006

Contact:
510.663.7963; joehawkins@sbcglobal.net
www.bbitl.net

SAN DIEGO, CA

Ebony Pride San Diego
August 2006

Contact:
619.835.9826; kjriley3@cox.net;
www.ebonypride.org

ATLANTA, GA

In The Life Atlanta
August 30 - September 4, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 7206, Atlanta, GA 30357-0206; 678.799.8526; info@inthelifeatl.com;
www.inthelifeatl.com

Host Hotel:
Sheraton Colony Square, 188 14th St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30361; 866.912.1171; 404.892.6000

Wednesday, August 30
Registration Begins; Host Hotel

Thursday, August 31
Candlelight Vigil; Location: TBA

Friday, September 1
Black Pride Market Place; Host Hotel (Friday-Sunday)

Opening Ceremony and 10-Year Anniversary Party; Location: TBA

SpeakFire! Erotic Open Mic; Host Hotel

Narcotics Anonymous Meetings; Host Hotel

After Hours Lounge; Host Hotel (Friday- Saturday)

Saturday, September 2
Taking Pride in Healthy Living Conference Day 1; Host Hotel. Community Luncheon, Workshops, 2nd Annual Southeastern Transgender Wellness Conference Health & Wellness Fair, Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Poetry Slam; Host Hotel

See Us In The Life Film Festival; Host Hotel

Sunday, September 3
Interfaith Worship Service; Host Hotel

Taking Pride in Healthy Living Conference Day 2; Host Hotel. Jazz Brunch,Workshops, 2nd Annual Southeastern Transgender Wellness Conference, Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Literary Cafe; Host Hotel

ITL Presents: Family Feud; Host Hotel

Living in Our Pride Fashion Show; Location: TBA

Monday, September 4
Stand Up and Represent Black Pride March; Location: TBA

DALLAS, TX

Dallas Southern Pride
September 28 - October 2, 2006

Contact:
214.540.4494; info@dallassouthernpride.com; www.dallasblackpride.com

Host Hotel:
Radisson Dallas Love Field Hotel,1241 W. Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, TX 75247; 214.630.7000

BALTIMORE, MD

Baltimore Black Gay Pride
October 6 - 8, 2006

Contact:
Baltimore Black Gay Pride, Inc., 714 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21201; 410.691.9669 ; info@bmoreblackpride.org; www.bmoreblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
Wyndham Baltimore - Inner Harbor, 101 West Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201; 410.752.1100

Friday, October 6
Black Out Party (Free), 7pm - 11pm; Host Hotel

Saturday, October 7
Workshops and Seminars, 12pm - 5pm; Host Hotel

Cultural Affair, 7:30pm - 11pm; Eubie Blake Cultural Center, 847 N. Howard St. African Attire

Sunday, October 8
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore Morning Service, 11am; 114 Read St., Baltimore, MD; 410.244.0884

Fall Festival Block Party, 4pm - 10pm; Club Bunns, 600 Block of W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD Entertainment, food, music, and vendors.

JACKSON, MS

Mississippi Black Pride
October 12 - 15, 2006

Contact:
Pride of Mississippi, Inc., P.O. Box 3872, Jackson, MS 39207; 601.948.8753 or 601.609.0092; msblkpride@yahoo.com; www.mississippiblackpride.com

NASHVILLE, TN

Nashville Black Pride
October 27 - 29, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 68335, Nashville, TN 37206
800.845.4266 ext. 269; nashblackpride@aol.com; www.brothersunited.com/blackpride.htm

Host Hotel:
Quality Inn & Suites, 2401 Brick Church Park Drive, Nashville, TN 37207. Rates before September 30, 2006: $60-Double, $70-Queen, $75-King. Includes deluxe hot breakfast.

SHREVEPORT, LA

Shreveport Black Pride
November 2 - 5, 2006

Contact:
817.401.7678; events@7connection.com; www.shreveportpride.com

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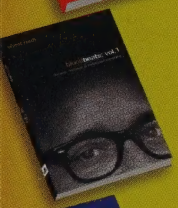

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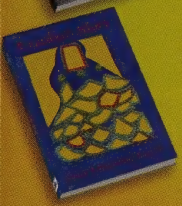

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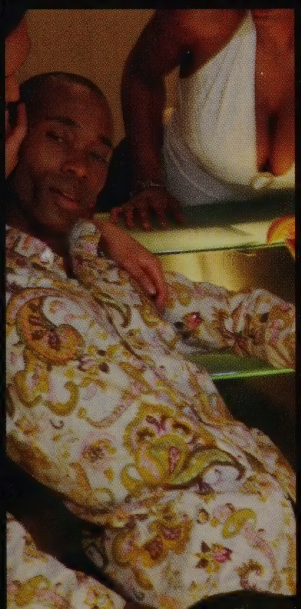

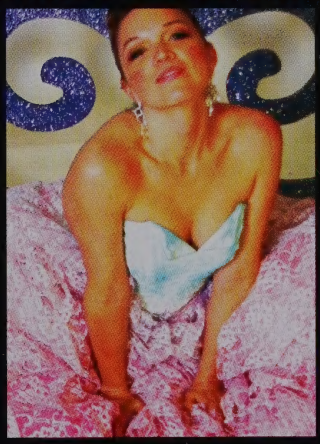

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PEOPLE TO WATCH

The BPRG has selected four exceptional members of the LGBT community as the people to watch in the months to come. Look out for their great work!

Brian A. Johnson

was recently named chair of the board of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the largest LGBT political action committee in the United States, and the only organization with the sole mission of identifying, training and supporting qualified openly LGBT officials and candidates. Johnson, who has served on the board since 2000 including one term as treasurer, is a retired chief financial officer of Resource Consultants, Inc., a northern Virginia-based government services provider. Johnson has an extensive history of leadership within and beyond the LGBT community. He is a member of Whitman-Walker Clinic's audit committee; a member of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and Equality Virginia; he was founding co-chair of the Bridge Builders Fund; a board member and treasurer of the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry; and past president of the American University Alumni Association. Johnson is also a former board member and treasurer of the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute, the nonprofit sister organization to the Victory Fund. Johnson resides in Virginia.

Francine Ramsey is Executive Director and co-founder of Zuna Institute, a national advocacy organization for Black lesbians. She has been a community activist for twenty years, working with civil rights organizations and various LGBT organizations of color. Ramsey is committed to bringing visibility and empowerment to the Black lesbian community, and to eliminating barriers that are deeply rooted in public policies that encourage homophobia, economic and educational injustices, and other forms of social discrimination. She has served on several boards and committees, including NIA Collective, Black Lesbian Elder Speak Project, Lambda Community Fund in Sacramento, and the Oakland Gay and Lesbian Democratic Club, and is currently a member of the campaign committee for "Equality for All" in California. She earned her BA degree from New College of California with an emphasis on women's social and economic analysis. She and her partner of fourteen years are enjoying life with their beautiful new grandson.

Katina Parker is the People of Color (POC) Media Manager for Communities of African Descent at Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). Her responsibilities include maintaining GLAAD's valuable relationships with African-American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations, activists and press outlets. Through GLAAD she is working to organize and further empower African-American LGBT organizations and activists to mount positive visibility campaigns, and to create impactful responses to imbalanced representations of the LGBT presence in and contributions to African-American communities. Prior to joining GLAAD, Parker received her MFA in film production from the University of Southern California and a bachelor of arts in speech communications from Wake Forest University. Post-grad, she worked in Los Angeles and New York as a visual artist/writer for a number of socially relevant artists/musicians/agencies.

photo courtesy of Vann Emery

Blackkat, a seventeen-year BDSM practitioner, has worked in nonprofit organization development and capacity building for over a decade and is currently a project director with a nonprofit consulting firm in New York City.

Blackkat is the founder of SAFER + SANER, a safer sex outreach project targeting the leather community; and is an invited speaker, presenter, and emcee at various national and international leather events. He is also the cultural custodian for a special collection chronicling the contributions of Black LGBTQ people in the leather community that is housed at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Blackkat made history by becoming the first Black man to represent the title of American Leatherman, and by gracing the cover of *POZ* during his title year. His accomplishments earned him two 2006 Pantheon of Leather awards, Northeast Regional and Community Choice Man of the Year.

Blackkat also volunteers his time with several community projects and has received several awards for his efforts. Somehow, Blackkat balances all that and his obligations to his Leather family, which includes his Daddy, three sons, and his two life partners.

To keep up with Blackkat check out his e-zine, www.blackkatsalley.com. He is also a featured writer at www.leatherpage.com.

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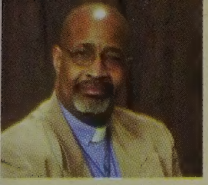

Can LGBT People of Faith Find a Church Home?

by Rev. Harris Thomas

Through the centuries, religious leaders have used their personal prejudices to define the Bible as a way to control their followers. Like Black slaves who were taught to believe that Jesus was white with blue eyes and blond hair, we were taught that God would never accept us as Gay Christians.

Growing up under the strict traditional Black Church, we were taught by our pastors to fear God and to always be faithful to the Church doctrine. Because God was portrayed as vengeful, we were in constant fear of being condemned to hell. But we were also afraid of being ostracized by our family and the church, so we hid from people what we knew we couldn't hide from God.

Going to workshops, conventions and conferences presented some with perfect opportunities to find someone from other congregations who had just as much to lose as we did, or to pick up a commercial sex worker to satisfy our sexual needs. If we were caught, the punishment was severe and very embarrassing. One could be arrested for soliciting. Or one could be seated by the officials of the church. HIV infection was also a risk.

Leaving the traditional church for one that is affirming presented its own challenges. We were deeply rooted in our family church and its doctrine; therefore it was hard to put aside the old teachings.

One Sunday, at the end of a service, I was approached by a young man crying and asking for prayer. He wanted to be in an affirming church but did not know how to make the transition. He went on to share with me that he believed with all of his heart that his present church was taking his money, using him for his talents, but was refusing to allow him to enter into ministry because he was Gay.

Hearing the words "God" and "Gay" in the same sentence was scary to him, but he realized that the moral values and the church principles that were being taught in the affirming church were basically the same things he had been learning in the traditional church for years. The only difference was that the affirming congregation did not condemn his sexuality.

His surprise at how many similarities there are between affirming and traditional churches is shared by many Black LGBT people of faith. Some people come to an affirming worship service with expectations and assumptions. They are left confused and perhaps a little disappointed to find that the worship experiences in both instances are very much the same.

Some Black LGBT people question whether there is a need for affirming churches. When I was asked to be a speaker at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md., for a talk called "Homosexuality and the Bible," a young woman asked if I opened Unity Fellowship because I did not want to deal with the teachings of the traditional church. I looked at her, smiled and said, yes, "just like the AME church."

Because Black LGBT culture was not fully recognized during traditional pride events around the country, Black LGBT people got together to honor and celebrate their contributions to the human rights movement. In that same vein, Black affirming churches are seeking to offer an Afrocentric worship experience to the Black LGBT community.

Rev. Harris Thomas is the Founding Pastor of Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore. He can be reached at hthomas@UFCB.org. www.UFCB.org

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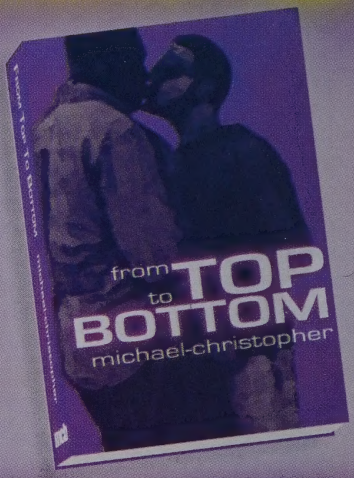

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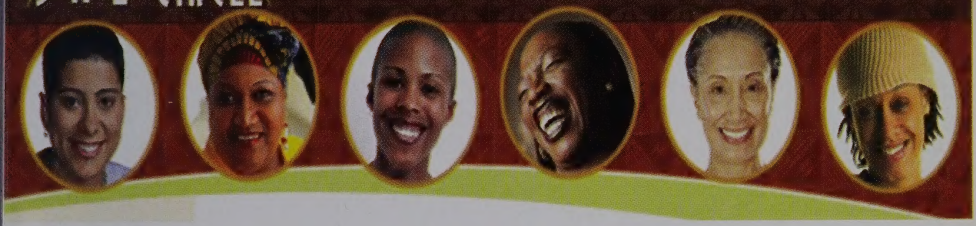

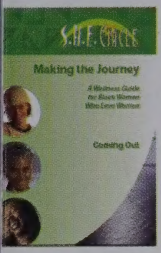

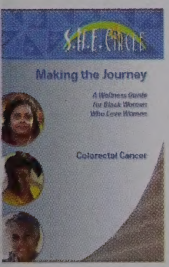

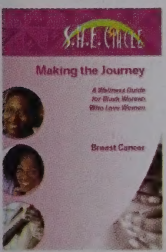

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< continued from page 7

- Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couples to report living in the same residence as 5 years earlier, a key indicator of relationship stability.

Denying the protections that come with marriage disproportionately hurts the ability of gay and lesbian African-American couples to save money, provide for their children, buy a house, or prepare for retirement.

Gay Americans' demand for the right to marry is not about the rite of marriage. While it is true that many gay people are working within their own faith traditions to challenge the exclusions of same-sex couples from the rites of marriage, the public and legal campaign to end discrimination in marriage is not a movement to further blur the lines drawn in the U.S. Constitution which separate church and state. No one has proposed that churches or religious institutions be forced to perform same-sex marriages. To the contrary, gay people seek the right to obtain a marriage license from City Hall like their heterosexual neighbors. Likewise, all the evidence suggests that the children of gay families, like their heterosexual counterparts, are healthy and loved.

Opponents of gay equality have latched on to understandable African-American suspicions of any efforts that might undermine the principles of equal treatment under the law. The far right has used marriage equality and the centrality of the Black Church in the experience of Black Americans to disingenuously raise the specter of government interference in church practices and anti-gay religious beliefs. Together these suspicions and pre-existing religious and cultural objections to homosexuality have conspired to create a wedge in an otherwise cohesive army fighting to ensure equality for all Americans.

Same gender loving Black people often express feelings of personal conflict between their identity and the feelings of support for the African-American community, and their love for their same-sex partners and the lesbian, gay and same gender loving communities that support them. Torn between the two, many Black homosexual people often chosen to be silent about their sexuality in exchange for the seemingly comfortable embrace of the Black community.

This dangerous mix of self-delusion, public and private dishonesty, and communal denial has had adverse and devastating consequences. Our denial keeps the truth from being spoken in our homes, work places and places of worship. In turn it has left our community ill-equipped to deal with challenges such as HIV and AIDS, anti-gay violence, and discrimination against gay families.

Our challenge is to raise the voice of Black gay and same gender loving people, our families, friends, and allies. We must engage openly gay and lesbian and same gender loving people in a proactive campaign to speak openly about their lives, hopes, dreams and challenges. Our goal must be to end the fear and ignorance that leads to prejudice and discrimination.

H. Alexander Robinson is the Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition. He lives with his partner, Gregory, in Baltimore, Md.

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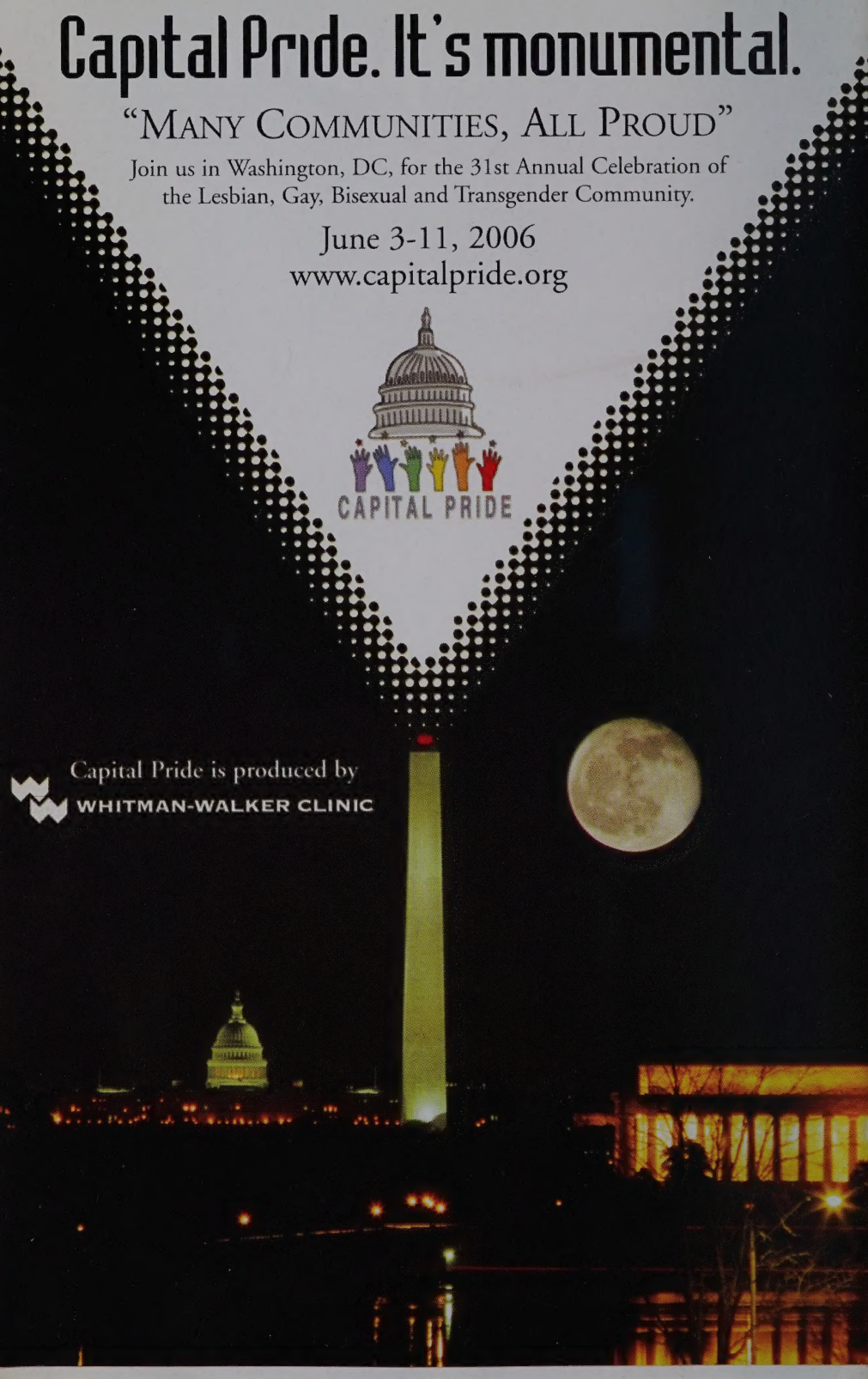

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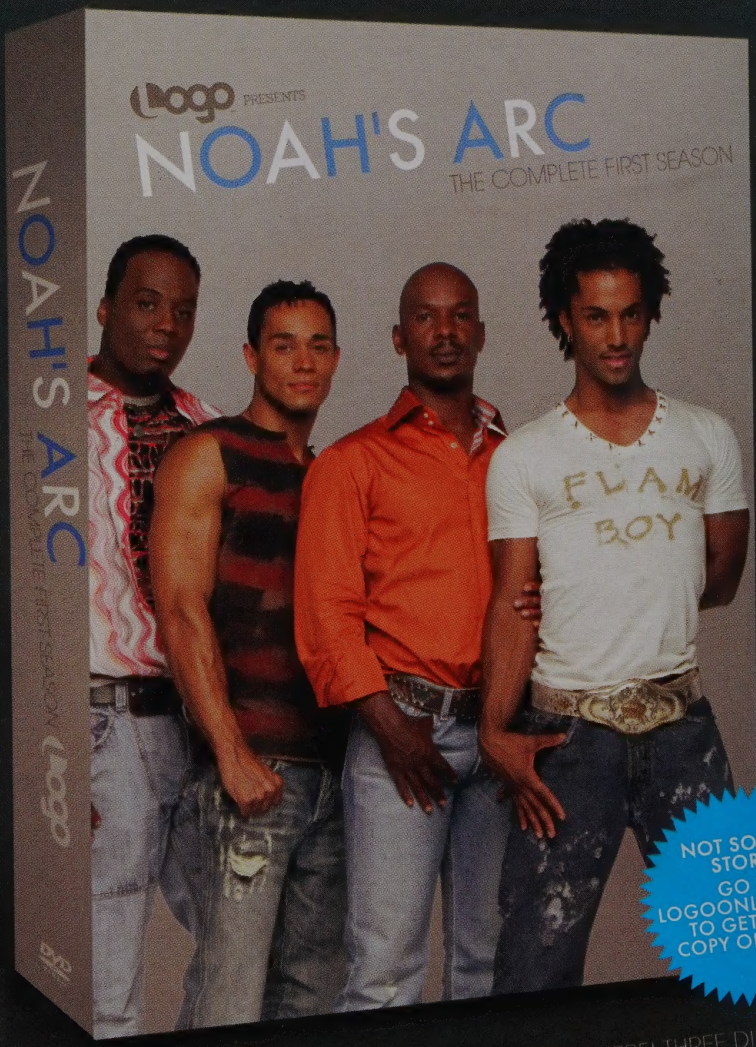

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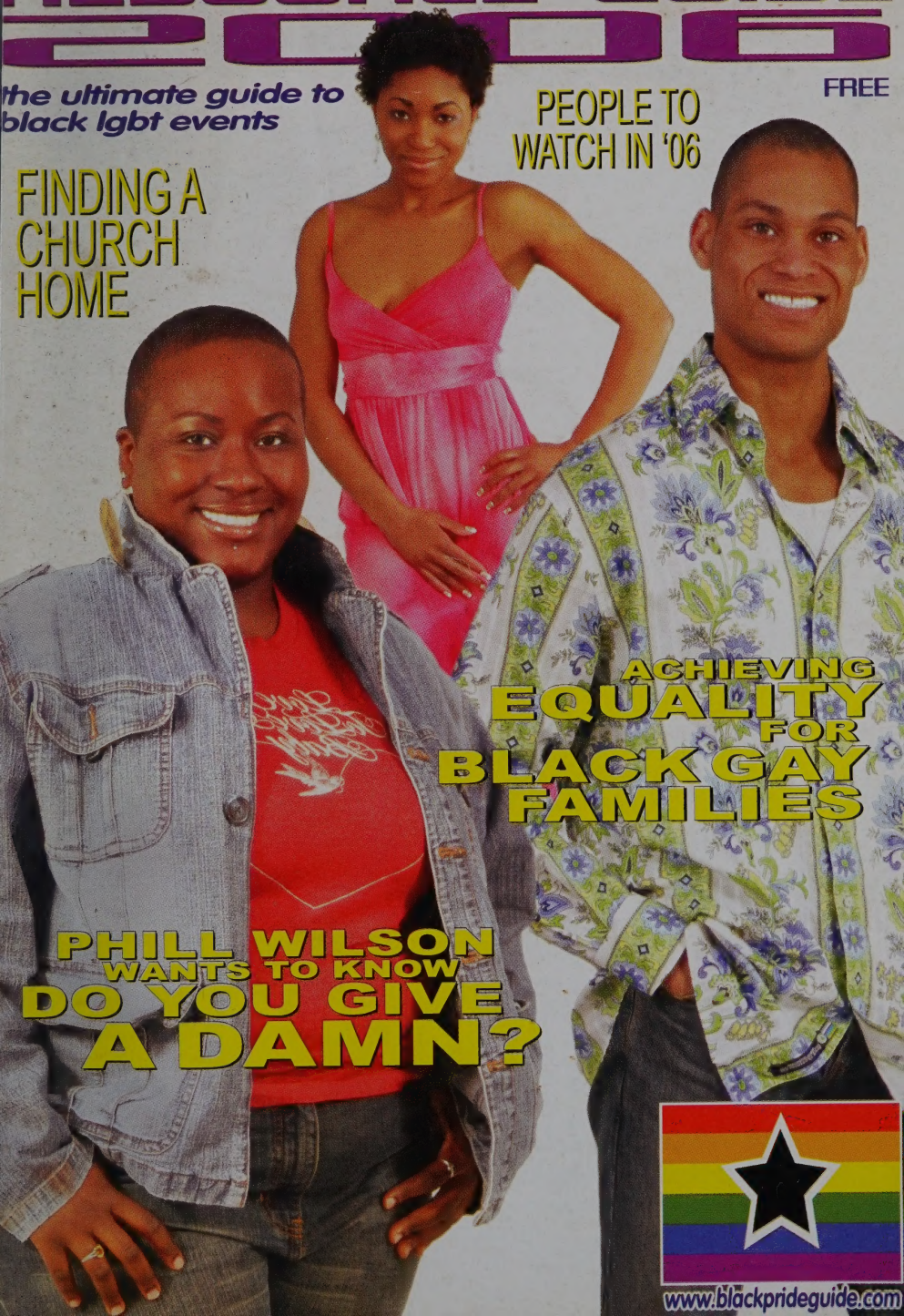

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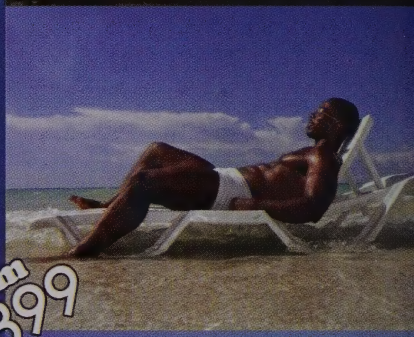

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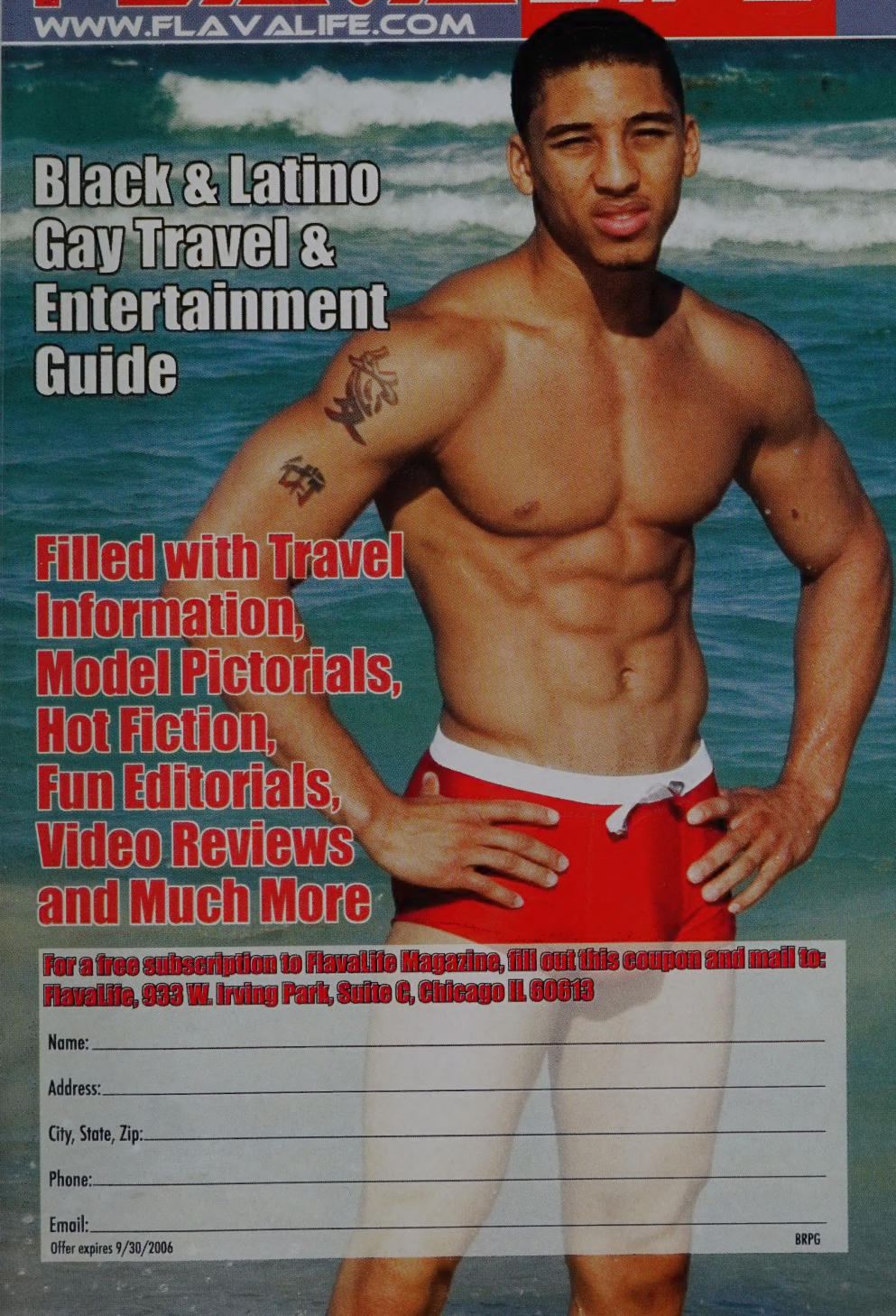

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BPRG2000@aol.com
www.blackprideguide.com

Are you ready? Well, get ready, folks! It's that time of year again. Time to celebrate being Black and same-gender loving.

We all know the historic legacy of our heritage as African Americans, but what about our legacy as same-gender loving people? What is our legacy?

Over the last few years, many institutions within the Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) community have struggled to remain strong. Some, like the Pride organizations themselves, relied heavily upon HIV/AIDS prevention funding, which has dwindled under the current political administration.

Being Black and same-gender loving poses a unique set of issues that are best addressed by those who live in those shoes. Show your pride this summer by supporting the many organizations listed in the *BLACK PRIDE RESOURCE GUIDE* and institutions that work on behalf of our people. Remember, there is strength in our unity.

cover photography : Amery Moultry

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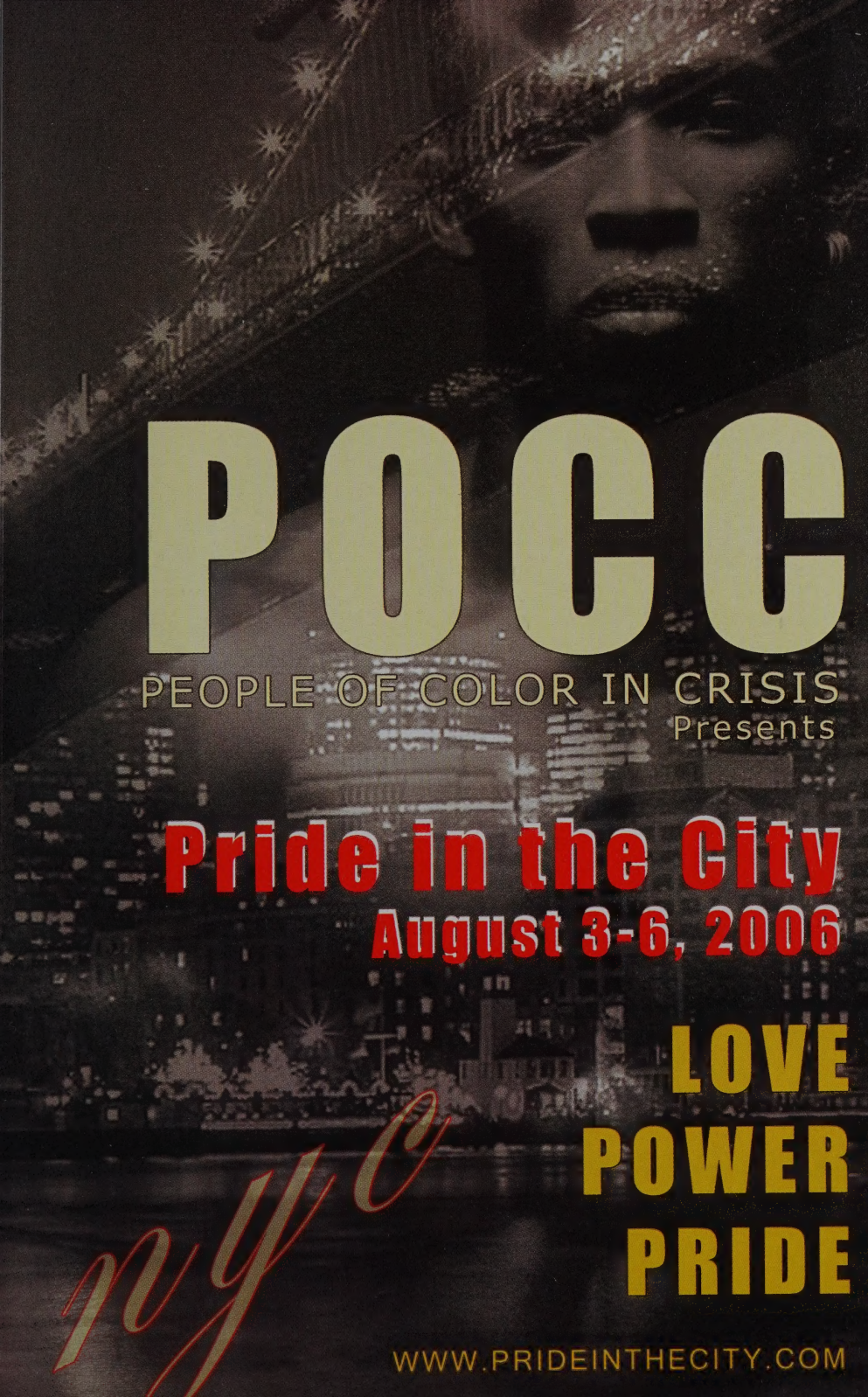
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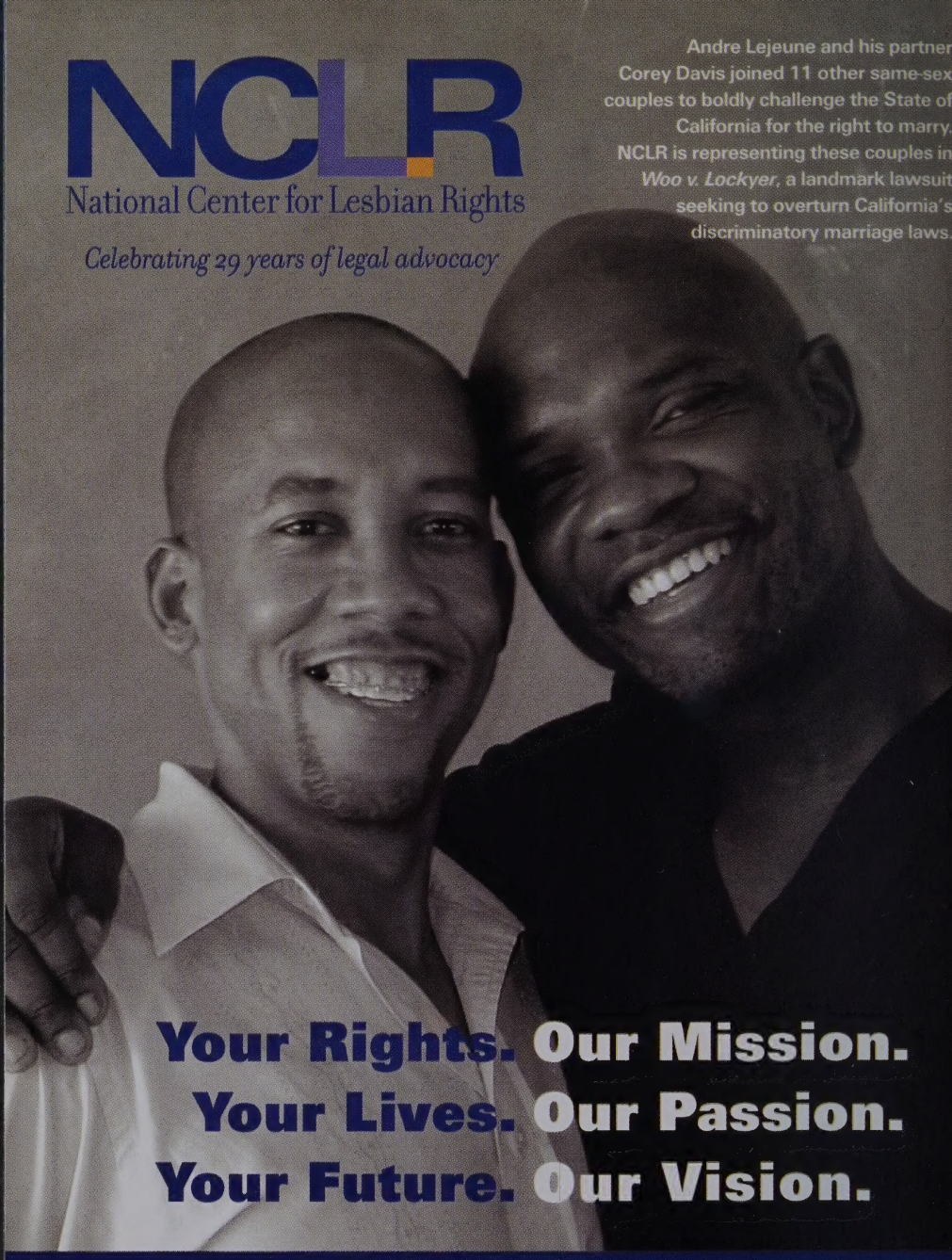
Celebrating 29 years of legal advocacy

Andre Lejeune and his partner Corey Davis joined 11 other same-sex couples to boldly challenge the State of California for the right to marry. NCLR is representing these couples in *Woo v. Lockyer*, a landmark lawsuit seeking to overturn California's discriminatory marriage laws.



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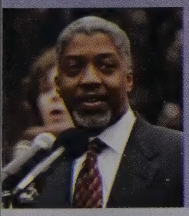


Jamal Has Two Mommies:
Achieving Equality for Black Gay Families

by H. Alexander Robinson

Pride season is upon us, and lesbians and gay men across the nation are focusing on the achievements of the gay civil rights movement. Black same gender loving people are coming together in cities from Washington, DC, to Los Angeles to raise funds to support our communities' needs, celebrate our culture, and raise the consciousness of our communities about the challenges we face.

Few topics will be more hotly debated and potentially politically and socially divisive than the call by progressive Americans to end the discrimination against gay families in marriage.

Equality and freedom from discrimination are core American values and of utmost political consequence for all minorities, but especially African Americans. So it should concern us all that some opponents of gay equality insist that by claiming the legacy of our nation's civil rights struggle, gay civil rights advocates are misappropriating African-Americans' fight for justice. However, the right not to be discriminated against is an American birthright that we all expect to enjoy under our laws and our Constitution. If America is to be a truly fair and open country, then the quest for civil rights must be universally American.

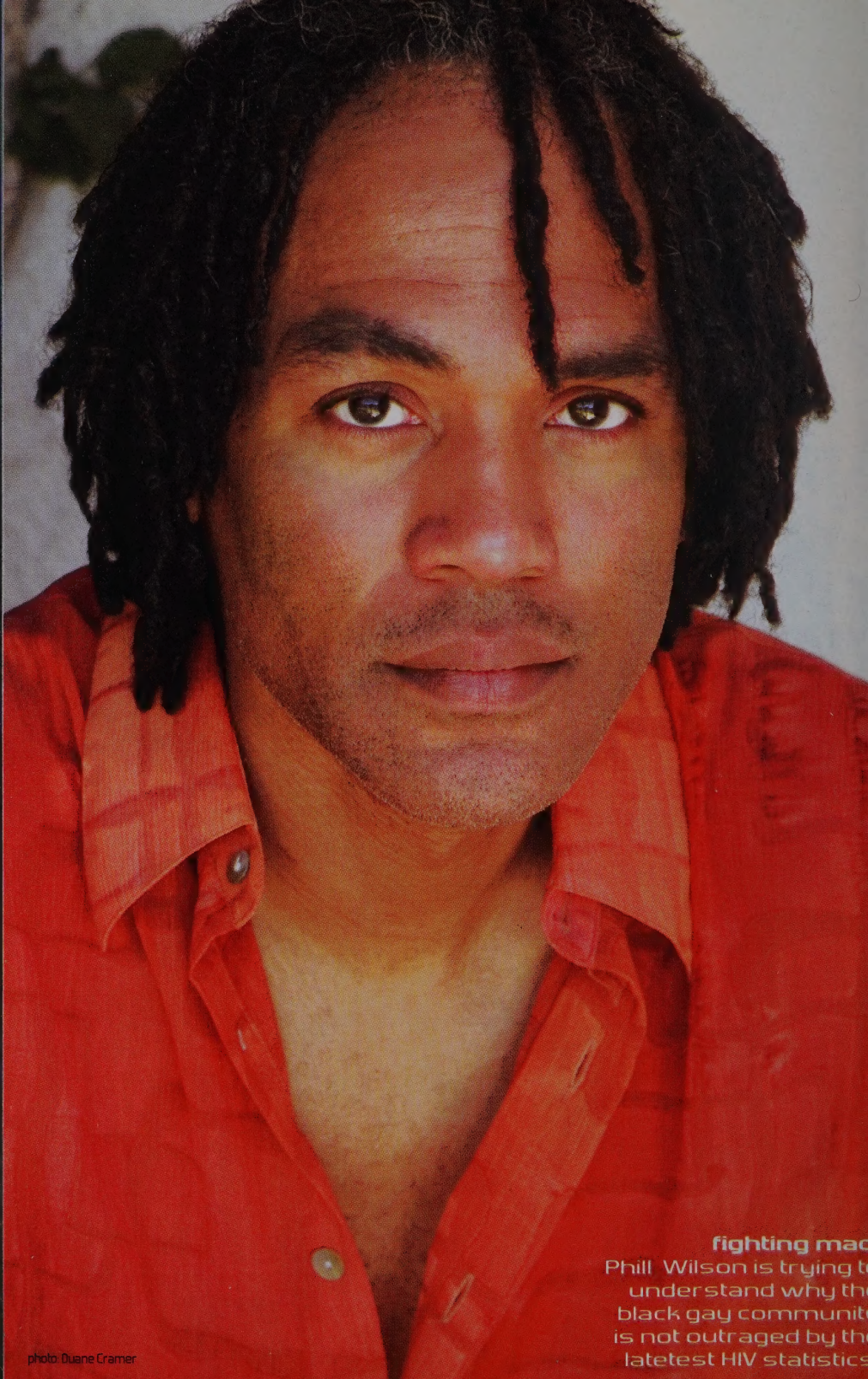
Black families have more to gain, on average, from the legal protections of marriage. A study of the 2000 Census data released last year by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) shows that Black lesbian couples are parenting at almost the same rate as Black married couples, and that Black same-sex couples parent at twice the rate of White gay couples. They also earn less, are less likely to own a home, and are more likely to hold public sector jobs.

- Three in five Black lesbian households (61%) include at least one child of one or both of the same-sex partners. Black lesbian couple households are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couple households (69%) to include a child of one or both of the adults. Nearly half of Black male same-sex couple households (46%) include a child of one or both of the partners.

- Black same-sex couples earn $20,000 less per year than White same-sex couples and are less likely to own the home they live in. They also earn less than Black married opposite-sex couples.

- Black gay partners are more likely than White gay partners to hold public sector jobs, which may provide domestic partner health insurance. Nine of the 13 state anti-gay marriage amendments approved last year threaten domestic partner benefits provided through state and local governmental entities, such as Dekalb County, Georgia or Ohio State University.

continued on page 28 >



fighting mad

Phill Wilson is trying t
understand why th
black gay communit
is not outraged by th
latetest HIV statistics

photo: Duane Cramer

Nearly 50% of Black Gay men in America may already be infected with HIV!

Does anyone give a damn?

by Phill Wilson

Men who have sex with men (MSM) bear a greater burden of HIV than any other group in the U.S. We account for an estimated 45 percent of people living with HIV, compared to 27 percent infected through heterosexual contact, and 22 percent infected through injection drug use.

In June 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a study showing a stunning 46%—nearly half—of the Black homosexual and bisexual men surveyed in five major cities were already HIV-positive (more than twice the infection rate among men of other races).

To make matters worse, more than two-thirds of the HIV-infected Black men in the study were unaware of their infection. That's right. Half of us may be infected and, of that half, two-thirds don't know it and so almost certainly aren't doing anything about it.

The factors contributing to the spread of HIV among Black gay and bisexual men are complex and vary from person to person. While some men do not yet recognize the level of risk they face, others are making complex decisions about sex and relationships based on perceptions about their partners' serostatus, old myths, and plain misinformation rather than real knowledge and open communication. There is a perception that AIDS is not as bad as it was, and of course there is an understandable desire among many of us to just enjoy relationships and have plain fun. Many of us are just tired of talking about how we are all going to die. But that fatigue will kill us. Disease does not have to overshadow our lives, but we must remain aware enough of it to protect ourselves.

Forty-six percent isn't a catastrophe. It's genocide!

But where is the outrage? As far as we can tell, following the CDC's announcement no Black or gay media organizations ran front-page stories. No civil rights organization marched in the streets or called on policymakers to take action. No Black celebrities sponsored relief concerts. There wasn't even a call to action issued by a Black gay and lesbian organization!

Now we could make charges of racism and homophobia (and some of us have). And we might be right. But those charges would not be helpful

and may be beside the point. A Black LGBT group founded to advocate for civil marriage rights sponsored a town hall meeting on "The State of Black LGBT America" during the annual Black gay pride event in Los Angeles in July 2005. AIDS was not even on the agenda. Nearly 50% of Black gay men in America may already be infected with HIV, and AIDS is not on our agenda? How can that be? While equal rights, including the right to marry, are certainly worthwhile goals, they are not very useful to us if we are dead. Keeping us alive long enough to enjoy the rights we deserve should at least be on the list.

This is not the first time the alarm has been sounded. An eye-opening 1994 study put HIV prevalence among Black homosexual and bisexual men at 21%. We did virtually nothing in response. That study was followed by a CDC study in 2000 in which—surprise, surprise—the prevalence rate among Black MSM had increased to over 30%. And again, after calling on the CDC to do more, we did virtually nothing. Now we're looking at 50%.

What will it take? How many Black gay men have to get infected, get sick and die before we—not CDC, not the Congressional Black Caucus, not the large AIDS organizations, but Black gay/bisexual/same gender loving/etc.—mobilize and take action?

Following CDC's prevention conference in June 2005 some Black gay and AIDS activists grumbled about the amount of attention crystal meth is getting. Please. White gay men are doing exactly what they should be doing. They are forcing each other to take responsibility, be accountable and attack a threat that is attacking them. Meanwhile, we're dancing from pride event to pride event while this threat is barreling down on us.

We have to start a national public discourse among ourselves about this new AIDS reality. We must create a cultural shift to where knowing your HIV status is the norm, where those of us who are negative are committed to stay that way and where those of us who are positive refuse to engage in behavior that might expose our brothers to the virus. We must all support each other in our collective and individual campaigns to end the epidemic. Nothing short of an all-out mobilization is acceptable. We must not allow any of the institutions or businesses that we support to fail to do their part in ending this epidemic. Most importantly, we must increase our visibility and demand our rightful places in our communities.

There is a role for all parties to play—government, the larger Black community, the white LGBT community, our society as a whole—but we must be willing to hold ourselves accountable and responsible for our own survival. How can Black gay and bisexual or same gender loving men ask others to respond if we continue to be so complacent in the face of our own genocide?

Phill Wilson is the Executive Director of the Black AIDS Institute. www.blackaids.org.

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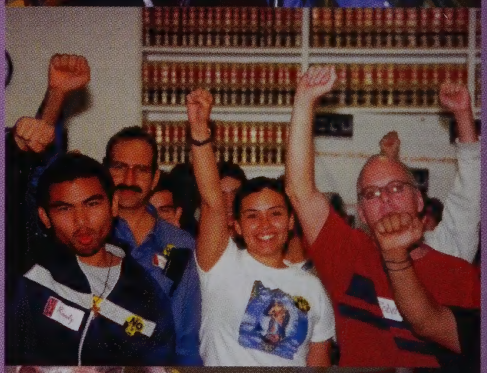

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AUSTIN, TX

Austin Relay 4 Life Pride Celebration

April 7 - 9, 2006

Contact:
Email: Info@austinrelay4life.com;
www.austinrelay4life.com

PHILADELPHIA, PA •

Philadelphia Black Pride

April 27 - 30, 2006

Contact:
Philadelphia Black Gay Pride, Inc.
c/o COLOURS, Inc.,1201 Chestnut St., 15th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19101; 215.496.0330; pride@coloursinc.org; www.phillyblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
The Crowne Plaza, 1800 Market St., Philadelphia, PA; 215.561.7500. Room Rate: $135

Friday, April 28
Opening Reception 6pm - 8pm; Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1800 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19103

Sunday, April 30
Interfaith Brunch, 9:30am - 12pm; Crowne Plaza Liberty A - 2nd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Closing Expo, 12pm - 6pm; 1st Troop Phila. Nat'l Armory, 23rd Street (Between Market & Chestnut streets) Philadelphia, PA 19103

HOUSTON, TX

Houston Splash

May 2 - 8, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 667248, Houston, TX 77266-7248; 832.443.1016; www.houstonsplash.com

Host Hotel:
Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 2828 Southwest Frwy Houston, TX 77098-4502; 713.942.2111

Thursday, May 4
Strip Down -N- H-Town, 11:30pm; Venue: TBA

Friday, May 5
Sapience Magazine Welcome Reception, 6 - 9pm; Host Hotel

11th Annual Him.4.Him Kick.Off Party, 10pm - 4am; The Meridian, 1503 Chartres St., Houston, TX 77003

11th Annual Her.4.Her Kick.Off Party, 10pm - 3:30am; Club TOYZ, 5322 Glenmont Dr., Houston, TX 77081

Late Night Strip Lounge All Black Affair, 10pm - 2am; Club Bartini, 1318 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77081

Saturday, May 6
Urban Lounge Vol.3; Venue: TBA

Flavalife Him.4.Him Party, 10pm - 4am; The Meridian

Voodoo Ball Vol. 3 "Ball or Fall," 2am - 4am; The Meridian

She-Doo Voodoo Her.4.Her Striptease; Venue: TBA

Sunday, May 7
Revolution Worship Celebration, 11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Voodoo East Beach Party, 12pm - 6pm; East Beach, 1923 Boddeker Drive, Galveston, TX 77550

Sunday Soiree Happy Hour, 7pm - 12am; Club Bartini, 1318 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77081

Southern Beach After-Party Show, 10pm - 3:30am; Club Richs, 2401 San Jacinto, Houston, TX 77056

Monday, May 8
Private Dancer Strip Show, 10pm - 3am; Club Bartini

All itineraries are tentative and subject to change. For full descriptions of events, updates and changes, please visit each web site periodically.

Listings were compiled from individual pride web sites and www.ifbprides.org. • Denotes International Federation of Black Pride member.

MIAMI, FL

Miami Sizzle

May 24 - 29, 2006

Contact:
1001 North Federal Hwy, Suite 305, Hallandale Beach, FL 33009; 305.528.7495; mail@sizzlemiami.com; www.sizzlemiami.com; www.sizzleher.com

Host Hotel:
Hyatt Regency, 400 South East Second Ave., Miami, FL 33131

Wednesday, May 24
VIP Cocktail Reception, 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Thursday, May 25
Sizzle Hospitality Lounge, Headquarters & Cyber Lounge Opens, 2:30pm - 10:30pm, Thurs. - Mon.; Host Hotel

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 5am

Friday, May 26
Sizzle 2006 Welcome Reception

Nightclub Party,10pm - 6am

Saturday, May 27
Sizzle Luau/Hawaiian Delights (Theme Event), 3pm - 7pm

Industry/Networking Cocktail Party (Invitation Only), 10pm - 11pm

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

Sunday, May 28
Sizzle Chapel, 11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Sunday Brunch,11am - 1pm; Host Hotel

Haulover Take-Over, 2pm - 5pm, Beach Event; shuttle buses provided

Dinner and Jazz at Sea - Elegant Upscale Event, 7:30pm - 11pm. All-White Attire (Advance purchase only)

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

Infinity Ball (Theme Event), 11pm - 4am

Monday, May 29
Haulover Take-Over II, 2pm - 5pm, Beach Event; shuttle buses provided

Sizzling Party Boat - Booze N' Cruise, 2:30pm - 5:30pm. Advance purchase only

Nightclub Party (Theme Event), 10pm - 6am

WASHINGTON, DC

DC Black Pride

May 26 - 29, 2006

Contact:
DC Black Pride, P. O. Box 77071, Washington, DC 20013; 202.737.5767; 1.866.94.BLGPD contactus@dcblackpride.org; www.dcblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
M Street Hotel, 1143 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202.775.0800

Friday, May 26
DC Black Pride Hospitality Suite, 11am - 8 pm, Fri - Sat.; Host Hotel

Welcome to the Red Room Opening Reception, 8pm - 11pm. Speed Dating, Message Center and The Ice Breaker; Host Hotel

Saturday, May 27
Wellness Festival and Workshops, 10am - 12pm; Host Hotel

DC Black Pride presents a Town Hall Meeting 1pm - 2:30pm; Host Hotel

Free Travel Trade Show sponsored by the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, 2pm - 5pm; Mayflower Hotel - 1127 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036

Film Festival, 3pm - 7pm; Host Hotel

Soul on Fire! DC Black Pride Spoken Word Slam, 7pm - 9pm; Host Hotel

Sunday, May 28
Interfaith Service, 9am - 11am; Host Hotel

DC Black Pride Festival 2006, 12pm - 7pm; Location: TBA. Vendors, Entertainment and more

DC Is Burning Ball, time/location TBA

Monday, May 29
DC Black Pride Festival in the park, 12pm - 7pm
Location: TBA

BOSTON, MA / NEW ENGLAND

Black Gay Pride New England
June 6 - 11, 2006

Contact:
617.238.2404; ljames@mac-boston.org; www.mac-boston.org

PORTLAND, OR

Portland Black Pride
June 11 - 18, 2006

Contact:
Brother to Brother Portland, P.O. Box 3182, Portland, OR 97208; 503.417.7991; www.brotobropdx.org; info@brotobropdx.org

MEMPHIS, TN

Memphis Black Pride
June 16 - 18, 2006

Contact:
901.331.3579 or 901.331.3438; hardawayarg@yahoo.com or terryltbuck61@aol.com; www.memphisblackpride.com

COLUMBIA, SC

Black & Latino Gay Pride Celebration
June 19-25, 2006

Contact:
Carolinas Black Pride Movement, 805 Cates St. Suite - I, Charlotte, NC 28202; 704.713.6948 or 704.968.3916; info@carolinasblackpridemovement.com; www.carolinasblackpridemovement.com

Host Hotel:
1200 Hampton St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.771.7000

Monday, June 19
Volunteer Training & Social, 6pm; Location: TBA

Tuesday, June 20
March to End AIDS; S.C. State House

Wednesday, June 21
Pride Kick-Off Party; Club Fusion, 920 Lady St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.765.1574

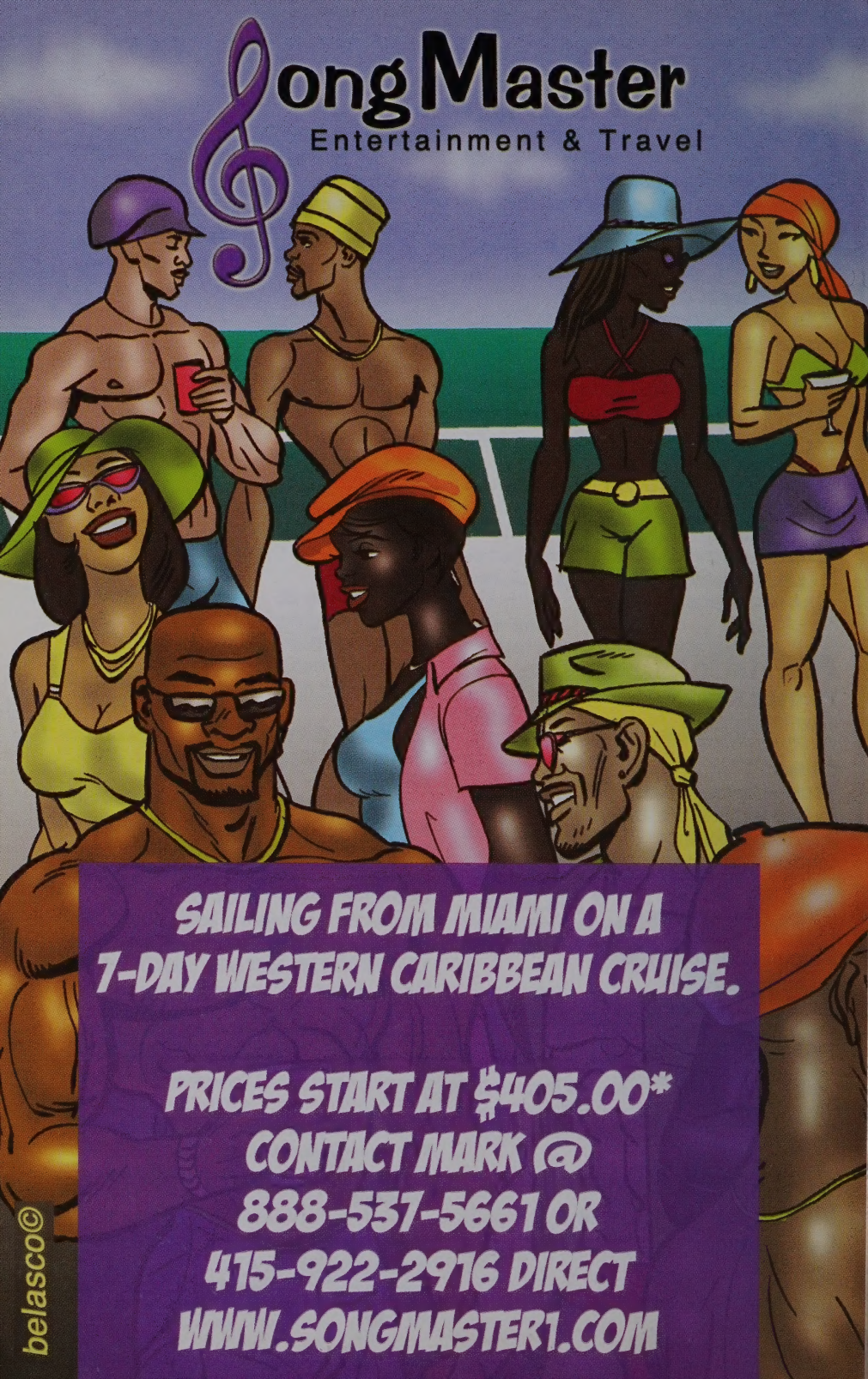
Thursday, June 22
"State of Emergency," Town Hall Meeting, 7pm; University of South Carolina's Law School Auditorium. Topics: Marriage Equality, HIV/AIDS Complimentary dinner served

Columbia Black & Latino Gay Pride Pageant, 9pm; PT's Cabaret, 1101 Harden St., Columbia, SC; 803.758.6090.

Friday, June 23
Black & Latino Gay Film Showcase, 5pm - 9pm; Featuring *Black Aura on the Angel, Just Between Us, Keith & Greg, DL Chronicles, Walk in the Light, Brooklyn's Bridge* and *Strange Fruit.* Nicklelodeon Theatre, 937 Main St., Columbia, SC 29201; 803.254.8234 office (hours are 10-6 Monday-Friday); www.nickelodeon.org

Saturday, June 24
Black & Latino Gay Pride Expo, 10am - 6pm; Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Featuring Billy Porter, Frenchie Davis, Mekole Wells. Vendors, local & national entertainment, Kidz Corner, Pride Souvenirs, Author's Square, Wellness Fair, free samples and promotional giveaways

Sunday, June 25
Pride Worship Service & Picnic, 1pm; Garden of Grace United Methodist Church (picnic following service)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LOS ANGELES, CA

At The Beach
June 28 - July 3, 2006

Contact:
At The Beach, Shorey Inc., DBA Los Angeles Black Pride, 4745 West Slauson Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90056; 323.293.4282; atbla@aol.com; www.atbla.com

CHICAGO, IL

Windy City Black Pride
June 30 - July 3, 2006

Contact:
773.473.4100; cnelson@windycityblackpride.org; www.windycityblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601-3764; 312.565.1234

TAMPA, FL

Central Florida Black Pride
July 20 - 23, 2006

Contact:
813.391.6776; floridablkpride@aol.com; www.floridablackpride.net

CHARLOTTE, NC

Charlotte NC Black Gay Pride
July 20 - 23, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 242596, Charlotte, NC 28224; 704.822.1356; pride@charlottencblackgaypride.org; www.charlottencblackgaypride.org

Host Hotel:
Best Western Charlotte Uptown, 201 S. McDowell St., Charlotte, NC 28204-2218; 704.372.7550

SEATTLE, WA

Seattle Black Pride
July 21 - 23, 2006

Contact:
1122 E. Pike St., #722, Seattle, WA 98122; 206.321.9794; info@seattleblackpride.org; www.seattleblackpride.org

DETROIT, MI

Detroit's Hotter Than July
July 26 - 30, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 3025, Detroit, MI 48231; 313.289.8669; info@hotterthanjuly.com; www.hotterthanjuly.com

PITTSBURGH, PA

Pittsburgh Black Pride
July 27 - 30, 2006

Contact:
412-537-7472; pghblackpride@hotmail.com

BROOKLYN, NY

Pride In The City
August 3 - 6, 2006

Contact:
People of Color in Crisis, 468 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11217; 718.230.0770 ext. 234; www.prideinthecity.com

JACKSONVILLE, FL

Jacksonville Florida Black Pride
August 4 - 6, 2006

Contact:
Jacksonville Florida Black Pride, Inc., P.O. Box 18841, Jacksonville, FL 32229; 904.858.3757; jaxbp@aol.com; www.jaxxblackpride.com

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Toronto Black Pride
August 4 - 12, 2006

Contact:
34 Davis Road, Aurora, Ontario, Canada C4G 2B6; 905.726.1615; info@torontoblackpride.com
www.torontoblackpride.com

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Indiana Black Gay Pride
August 11 - 13, 2006

Contact:
317.592.9529; indianablackgaypride@yahoo.com; www.indianablackpride.com

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Minnesota GLBT Soul Essence
August 11 - 13, 2006

Contact:
5820 10th Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55417; 612.414.2102;
www.soulessenceminnesota.org

ST. LOUIS, MO

St. Louis Black Pride
August 18 - 20, 2006

Contact:
St. Louis Black Pride Committee, Inc., P.O. Box 4854; St. Louis, MO 63108; 314.776.4966; president@stlouisblackpride.org; www.stlouisblackpride.org

OAKLAND, CA

Bay Area Black In The Life Celebration
August 16 - 20, 2006

Contact:
510.663.7963; joehawkins@sbcglobal.net
www.bbitl.net

SAN DIEGO, CA

Ebony Pride San Diego
August 2006

Contact:
619.835.9826; kjriley3@cox.net; www.ebonypride.org

ATLANTA, GA

In The Life Atlanta
August 30 - September 4, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 7206, Atlanta, GA 30357-0206; 678.799.8526; info@inthelifeatl.com; www.inthelifeatl.com

Host Hotel:
Sheraton Colony Square, 188 14th St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30361; 866.912.1171; 404.892.6000

Wednesday, August 30
Registration Begins; Host Hotel

Thursday, August 31
Candlelight Vigil; Location: TBA

Friday, September 1
Black Pride Market Place; Host Hotel (Friday-Sunday)

Opening Ceremony and 10-Year Anniversary Party; Location: TBA

SpeakFire! Erotic Open Mic; Host Hotel

Narcotics Anonymous Meetings; Host Hotel

After Hours Lounge; Host Hotel (Friday- Saturday)

Saturday, September 2
Taking Pride in Healthy Living Conference Day 1; Host Hotel. Community Luncheon, Workshops, 2nd Annual Southeastern Transgender Wellness Conference Health & Wellness Fair, Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Poetry Slam; Host Hotel

See Us In The Life Film Festival; Host Hotel

Sunday, September 3
Interfaith Worship Service; Host Hotel

Taking Pride in Healthy Living Conference Day 2; Host Hotel. Jazz Brunch,Workshops, 2nd Annual Southeastern Transgender Wellness Conference, Narcotics Anonymous Meetings

Literary Cafe; Host Hotel

ITL Presents: Family Feud; Host Hotel

Living in Our Pride Fashion Show; Location: TBA

Monday, September 4
Stand Up and Represent Black Pride March; Location: TBA

DALLAS, TX

Dallas Southern Pride
September 28 - October 2, 2006

Contact:
214.540.4494; info@dallassouthernpride.com; www.dallasblackpride.com

Host Hotel:
Radisson Dallas Love Field Hotel,1241 W. Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, TX 75247; 214.630.7000

BALTIMORE, MD

Baltimore Black Gay Pride
October 6 - 8, 2006

Contact:
Baltimore Black Gay Pride, Inc., 714 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21201; 410.691.9669 ; info@bmoreblackpride.org; www.bmoreblackpride.org

Host Hotel:
Wyndham Baltimore - Inner Harbor, 101 West Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201; 410.752.1100

Friday, October 6
Black Out Party (Free), 7pm - 11pm; Host Hotel

Saturday, October 7
Workshops and Seminars, 12pm - 5pm; Host Hotel

Cultural Affair, 7:30pm - 11pm; Eubie Blake Cultural Center, 847 N. Howard St. African Attire

Sunday, October 8
Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore Morning Service, 11am; 114 Read St., Baltimore, MD; 410.244.0884

Fall Festival Block Party, 4pm - 10pm; Club Bunns, 600 Block of W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD Entertainment, food, music, and vendors.

JACKSON, MS

Mississippi Black Pride
October 12 - 15, 2006

Contact:
Pride of Mississippi, Inc., P.O. Box 3872, Jackson, MS 39207; 601.948.8753 or 601.609.0092; msblkpride@yahoo.com; www.mississippiblackpride.com

NASHVILLE, TN

Nashville Black Pride
October 27 - 29, 2006

Contact:
P.O. Box 68335, Nashville, TN 37206
800.845.4266 ext. 269; nashblackpride@aol.com; www.brothersunited.com/blackpride.htm

Host Hotel:
Quality Inn & Suites, 2401 Brick Church Park Drive, Nashville, TN 37207. Rates before September 30, 2006: $60-Double, $70-Queen, $75-King. Includes deluxe hot breakfast.

SHREVEPORT, LA

Shreveport Black Pride
November 2 - 5, 2006

Contact:
817.401.7678; events@7connection.com; www.shreveportpride.com

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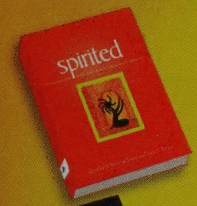

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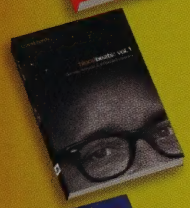

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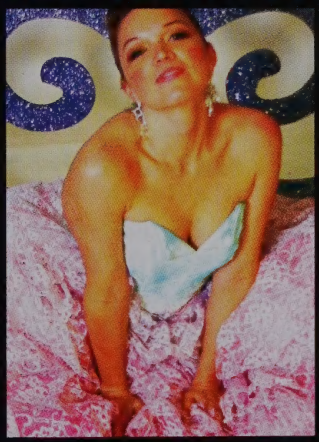

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PEOPLE TO WATCH

The BPRG has selected four exceptional members of the LGBT community as the people to watch in the months to come. Look out for their great work!

Brian A. Johnson

was recently named chair of the board of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the largest LGBT political action committee in the United States, and the only organization with the sole mission of identifying, training and supporting qualified openly LGBT officials and candidates. Johnson, who has served on the board since 2000 including one term as treasurer, is a retired chief financial officer of Resource Consultants, Inc., a northern Virginia-based government services provider. Johnson has an extensive history of leadership within and beyond the LGBT community. He is a member of Whitman-Walker Clinic's audit committee; a member of the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and Equality Virginia; he was founding co-chair of the Bridge Builders Fund; a board member and treasurer of the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry; and past president of the American University Alumni Association. Johnson is also a former board member and treasurer of the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute, the nonprofit sister organization to the Victory Fund. Johnson resides in Virginia.

Francine Ramsey is Executive Director and co-founder of Zuna Institute, a national advocacy organization for Black lesbians. She has been a community activist for twenty years, working with civil rights organizations and various LGBT organizations of color. Ramsey is committed to bringing visibility and empowerment to the Black lesbian community, and to eliminating barriers that are deeply rooted in public policies that encourage homophobia, economic and educational injustices, and other forms of social discrimination. She has served on several boards and committees, including NIA Collective, Black Lesbian Elder Speak Project, Lambda Community Fund in Sacramento, and the Oakland Gay and Lesbian Democratic Club, and is currently a member of the campaign committee for "Equality for All" in California. She earned her BA degree from New College of California with an emphasis on women's social and economic analysis. She and her partner of fourteen years are enjoying life with their beautiful new grandson.

Katina Parker is the People of Color (POC) Media Manager for Communities of African Descent at Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). Her responsibilities include maintaining GLAAD's valuable relationships with African-American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations, activists and press outlets. Through GLAAD she is working to organize and further empower African-American LGBT organizations and activists to mount positive visibility campaigns, and to create impactful responses to imbalanced representations of the LGBT presence in and contributions to African-American communities. Prior to joining GLAAD, Parker received her MFA in film production from the University of Southern California and a bachelor of arts in speech communications from Wake Forest University. Post-grad, she worked in Los Angeles and New York as a visual artist/writer for a number of socially relevant artists/musicians/agencies.

photo courtesy of Vann Emery

Blackkat, a seventeen-year BDSM practitioner, has worked in nonprofit organization development and capacity building for over a decade and is currently a project director with a nonprofit consulting firm in New York City.

Blackkat is the founder of SAFER + SANER, a safer sex outreach project targeting the leather community; and is an invited speaker, presenter, and emcee at various national and international leather events. He is also the cultural custodian for a special collection chronicling the contributions of Black LGBTQ people in the leather community that is housed at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Blackkat made history by becoming the first Black man to represent the title of American Leatherman, and by gracing the cover of *POZ* during his title year. His accomplishments earned him two 2006 Pantheon of Leather awards, Northeast Regional and Community Choice Man of the Year.

Blackkat also volunteers his time with several community projects and has received several awards for his efforts. Somehow, Blackkat balances all that and his obligations to his Leather family, which includes his Daddy, three sons, and his two life partners.

To keep up with Blackkat check out his e-zine, www.blackkatsalley.com. He is also a featured writer at www.leatherpage.com.

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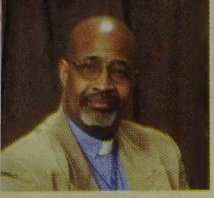

Can LGBT People of Faith Find a Church Home?

by Rev. Harris Thomas

Through the centuries, religious leaders have used their personal prejudices to define the Bible as a way to control their followers. Like Black slaves who were taught to believe that Jesus was white with blue eyes and blond hair, we were taught that God would never accept us as Gay Christians.

Growing up under the strict traditional Black Church, we were taught by our pastors to fear God and to always be faithful to the Church doctrine. Because God was portrayed as vengeful, we were in constant fear of being condemned to hell. But we were also afraid of being ostracized by our family and the church, so we hid from people what we knew we couldn't hide from God.

Going to workshops, conventions and conferences presented some with perfect opportunities to find someone from other congregations who had just as much to lose as we did, or to pick up a commercial sex worker to satisfy our sexual needs. If we were caught, the punishment was severe and very embarrassing. One could be arrested for soliciting. Or one could be seated by the officials of the church. HIV infection was also a risk.

Leaving the traditional church for one that is affirming presented its own challenges. We were deeply rooted in our family church and its doctrine; therefore it was hard to put aside the old teachings.

One Sunday, at the end of a service, I was approached by a young man crying and asking for prayer. He wanted to be in an affirming church but did not know how to make the transition. He went on to share with me that he believed with all of his heart that his present church was taking his money, using him for his talents, but was refusing to allow him to enter into ministry because he was Gay.

Hearing the words "God" and "Gay" in the same sentence was scary to him, but he realized that the moral values and the church principles that were being taught in the affirming church were basically the same things he had been learning in the traditional church for years. The only difference was that the affirming congregation did not condemn his sexuality.

His surprise at how many similarities there are between affirming and traditional churches is shared by many Black LGBT people of faith. Some people come to an affirming worship service with expectations and assumptions. They are left confused and perhaps a little disappointed to find that the worship experiences in both instances are very much the same.

Some Black LGBT people question whether there is a need for affirming churches. When I was asked to be a speaker at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md., for a talk called "Homosexuality and the Bible," a young woman asked if I opened Unity Fellowship because I did not want to deal with the teachings of the traditional church. I looked at her, smiled and said, yes, "just like the AME church."

Because Black LGBT culture was not fully recognized during traditional pride events around the country, Black LGBT people got together to honor and celebrate their contributions to the human rights movement. In that same vein, Black affirming churches are seeking to offer an Afrocentric worship experience to the Black LGBT community.

Rev. Harris Thomas is the Founding Pastor of Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore. He can be reached at hthomas@UFCB.org. www.UFCB.org

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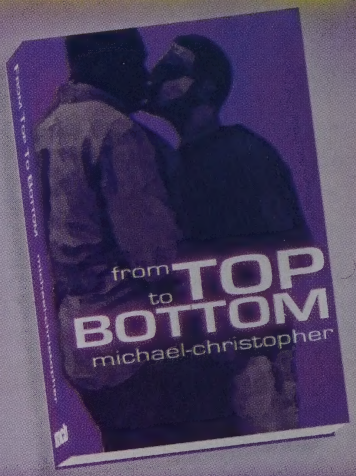

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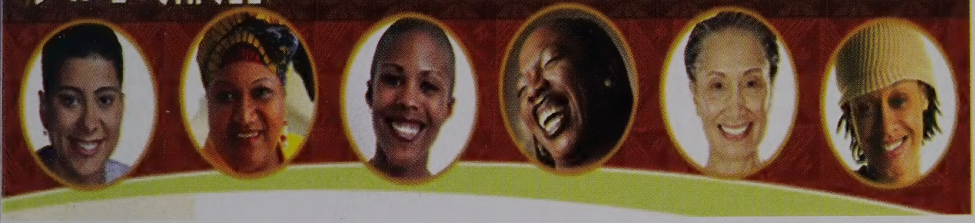

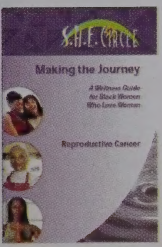

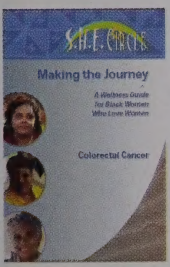

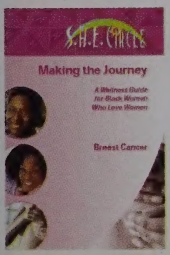

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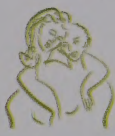

A program of the Mautner Project,
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- Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as Black married opposite-sex couples to report living in the same residence as 5 years earlier, a key indicator of relationship stability.

Denying the protections that come with marriage disproportionately hurts the ability of gay and lesbian African-American couples to save money, provide for their children, buy a house, or prepare for retirement.

Gay Americans' demand for the right to marry is not about the rite of marriage. While it is true that many gay people are working within their own faith traditions to challenge the exclusions of same-sex couples from the rites of marriage, the public and legal campaign to end discrimination in marriage is not a movement to further blur the lines drawn in the U.S. Constitution which separate church and state. No one has proposed that churches or religious institutions be forced to perform same-sex marriages. To the contrary, gay people seek the right to obtain a marriage license from City Hall like their heterosexual neighbors. Likewise, all the evidence suggests that the children of gay families, like their heterosexual counterparts, are healthy and loved.

Opponents of gay equality have latched on to understandable African-American suspicions of any efforts that might undermine the principles of equal treatment under the law. The far right has used marriage equality and the centrality of the Black Church in the experience of Black Americans to disingenuously raise the specter of government interference in church practices and anti-gay religious beliefs. Together these suspicions and pre-existing religious and cultural objections to homosexuality have conspired to create a wedge in an otherwise cohesive army fighting to ensure equality for all Americans.

Same gender loving Black people often express feelings of personal conflict between their identity and the feelings of support for the African-American community, and their love for their same-sex partners and the lesbian, gay and same gender loving communities that support them. Torn between the two, many Black homosexual people often chosen to be silent about their sexuality in exchange for the seemingly comfortable embrace of the Black community.

This dangerous mix of self-delusion, public and private dishonesty, and communal denial has had adverse and devastating consequences. Our denial keeps the truth from being spoken in our homes, work places and places of worship. In turn it has left our community ill-equipped to deal with challenges such as HIV and AIDS, anti-gay violence, and discrimination against gay families.

Our challenge is to raise the voice of Black gay and same gender loving people, our families, friends, and allies. We must engage openly gay and lesbian and same gender loving people in a proactive campaign to speak openly about their lives, hopes, dreams and challenges. Our goal must be to end the fear and ignorance that leads to prejudice and discrimination.

H. Alexander Robinson is the Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition. He lives with his partner, Gregory, in Baltimore, Md.

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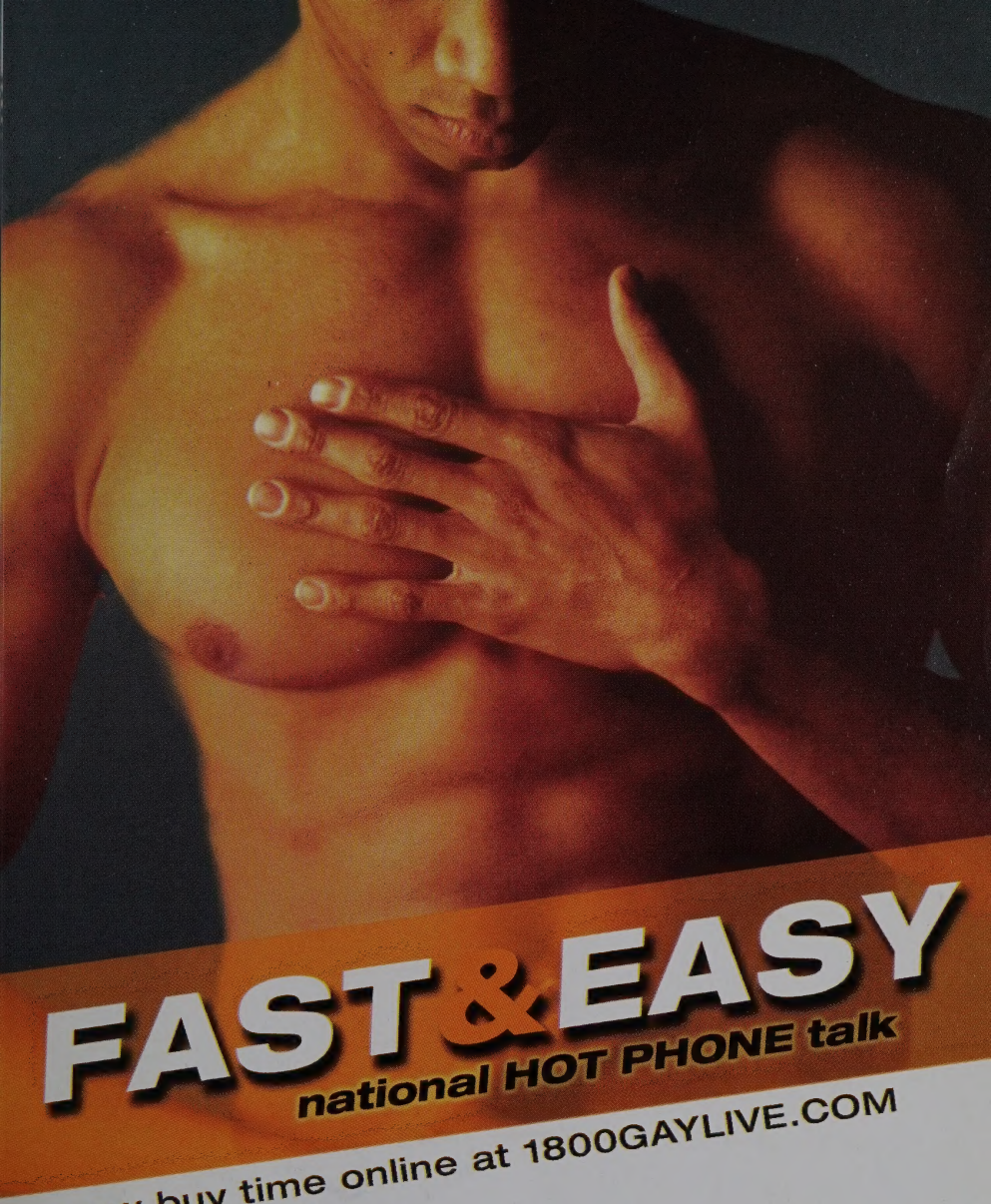

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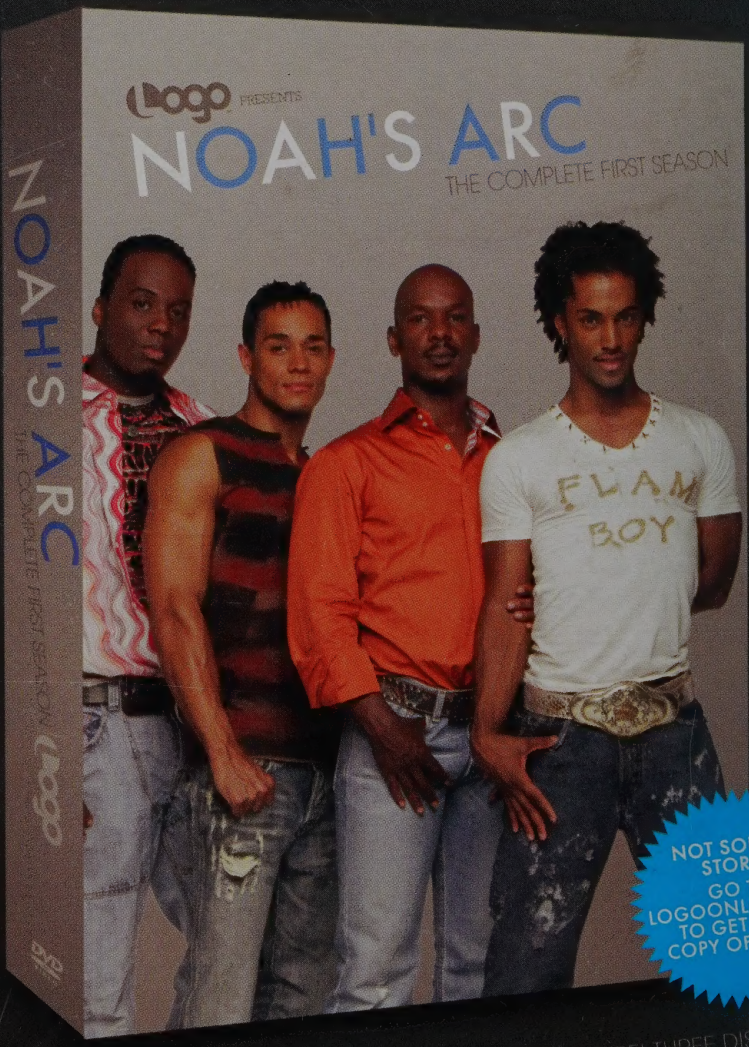

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